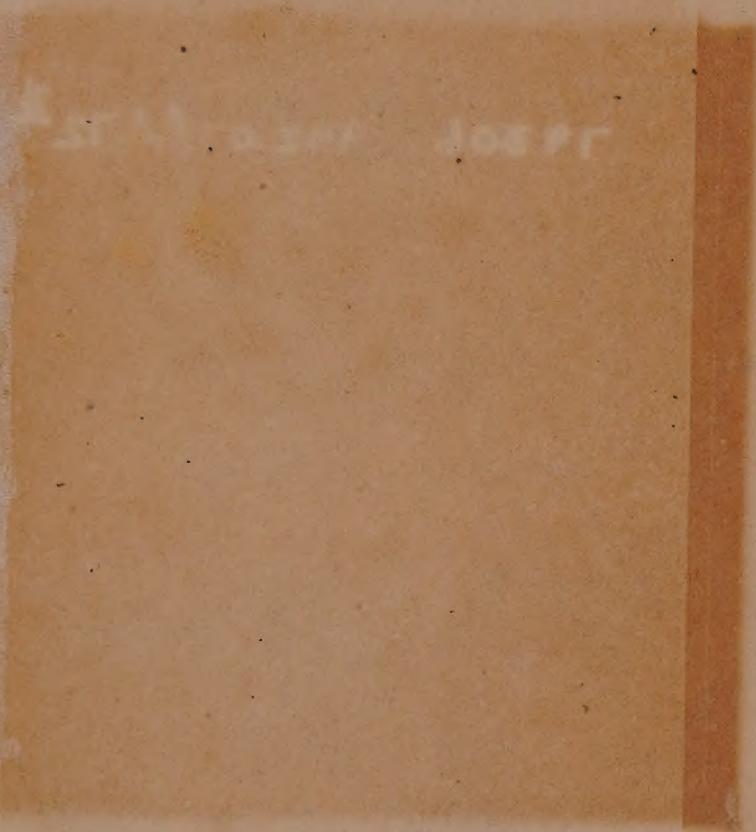


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THE
HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND,
FROM
THE ACCESSION
OF
KING GEORGE THE THIRD,
TO THE
CONCLUSION OF PEACE
IN THE YEAR
ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE.

BY JOHN ADOLPHUS, ESQ. F. S. A.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND.

GEORGE THE THIRD.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

1777—1778.

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Progress of the bills through the House of Commons.—Debated in the House of Lords—passed.—Motions on the subject in the Lower House.

CHAP.
XXXII.

1777.
20th Nov.
Meeting of
parliament.

THE King in his speech from the throne, declared his satisfaction in having recourse to the wisdom and support of the legislature, at a conjuncture when the continuance of rebellion demanded most serious attention. He had faithfully employed the powers intrusted to him for the suppression of this revolt, and had just confidence in the conduct and courage of his officers; but it would be necessary to prepare for such further operations, as the contingencies of war, and obstinacy of the rebels, might render expedient. Foreign powers had given strong assurances of pacific dispositions; but the armaments of France and Spain still continuing, he had considerably augmented the naval force; being firmly determined never to disturb the peace of Europe, though he would faithfully guard the honour of the British crown. He still hoped the deluded and unhappy multitude of America would return to their allegiance; and that remembrance of what they once enjoyed, regret for what they had lost, and feelings of what they suffered, under the arbitrary tyranny of their leaders, would re-kindle in their hearts a spirit of loyalty to their sovereign, and of attachment to their mother-country; and that they would enable him, with the concurrence and support of parliament, to accomplish, what he should consider the greatest happiness of his life, and the greatest glory of his reign, the restoration of peace, order, and confidence to the American colonies.

Debate on
the address
in the House
of Lords.

The Earl of Coventry pronouncing the independence of America the fall of Great Britain, and the transfer of the seat of empire to the other side of the Atlantic, to be no less certain than the growth of herbage, or the ascent of flame, resisted the address, advising the House to seek a temporary preservation by making a virtue of necessity, withdrawing the fleets and armies, and declaring America independent.

Such suggestions, enforced by such arguments, could have made no impression ; but the attention of the House was powerfully excited by a motion of amendment from Lord Chatham, desiring the King to take the most speedy measures for restoring peace. He expressed the strongest disapprobation of the address, and the fatal measures which it approved. The present was a perilous and tremendous moment ! It was not a time for adulation ; the smoothness of flattery could not avail, could not save us in this awful and rugged crisis : it was necessary to instruct the throne in the language of truth. Parliament must dispel the mists of delusion, and display, in its full danger and true colours, the ruin brought to their doors. It was customary for the King, on similar occasions, not to lead, but to be guided by parliament ; to ask advice, and not dictate to the hereditary great council of the nation. As it was the right of parliament to give, so it was the duty of the crown to ask, counsel. But this speech tells of measures already agreed on, and cavalierly desires concurrence. It talks of wisdom and support ; counts on the certainty of events yet in the womb of time ; but in plan and design is peremptory and dictatorial. "Is this," he exclaimed, "proper language ? Is it fit to be endured ? Is this high pretension to over-rule the dispositions of Providence itself, and the will and judgment of parliament, justified by any former conduct, or precedent prediction ? No ; it is the language of an ill-founded confidence ; a confidence supported hitherto only by a succession of disappointments, disgraces, and defeats. I am astonished how any minister dare advise His Majesty to hold such language ; I would be glad to see the minister that dare avow it in his place. What is the import of this extraordinary application, but an unlimited confidence in those who have hitherto misguided, deceived, and misled you ? It is unlimited ; desires you to grant, not what you may be satisfied is necessary, but what His Majesty's ministers may

C H A P.

XXXII.

1777.

Amendment
moved by
Lord Chat-
ham.

C H A P. choose to think so: troops, fleets, treaties, and
XXXII. subsidies, not yet revealed.

1777.

“ Can the minister of the day expect, can parliament be thus deluded to give, unlimited credit and support for steady perseverance in measures, which have reduced this late flourishing empire to ruin and contempt! ‘ But yesterday, and England might have stood against the world; now none so poor to do her reverence.’ The words of a poet are not fiction: it is a shameful truth, that not alone the power and strength of the country are wasting and expiring, but her well-earned glories, her true honour, and substantial dignity, are sacrificed. France has insulted you; she has encouraged and sustained America: and whether America be wrong or right, we ought to spurn at the officious insult of French interference. The ministers and ambassadors of those who are called rebels and enemies, are in Paris: in Paris they transact the reciprocal interests of America and France. Can there be a more mortifying insult? Can even *our* ministers sustain a more humiliating disgrace? Dare they resent it? Do they presume even to hint a vindication of their honour and the dignity of the state by requiring the dismissal of the plenipotentiaries of America? Such is the degradation to which they have reduced the glories of England, who, but yesterday, gave law to the House of Bourbon.

“ No man thinks more highly than I of the virtues and valour of British troops: I know they can achieve any thing, except impossibilities; and the conquest of English America is an impossibility. You cannot, I venture to say it, you cannot conquer America. What is your present situation there? We do not know the worst; but we know that in three campaigns we have done nothing, and suffered much. Conquest is impossible: you may swell every expense, and every effort still more extravagantly; pile and accumulate every assistance you can buy or borrow; traffic and barter with every little pitiful German prince, that sells his subjects to foreign shambles; your efforts are for

ever vain and impotent ; doubly so from this mercenary aid on which you rely ; for it irritates to an incurable resentment, the minds of your enemies. To overrun them with the mercenary sons of rapine and plunder ; devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty ! If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms ; never ; never ; never !

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“ But who is the man that has dared to authorise and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage ? To call into civil alliance the wild and inhuman savage of the woods ; to delegate to the merciless Indians the defence of disputed rights ; and to wage the horrors of his barbarous war against our brethren ? These enormities cry aloud for redress and punishment ; and unless done away, will leave an indelible stain on the national honour. The strength and character of our army are impaired ; infected by German allies, with the mercenary spirit of robbery and rapine, familiarised to horrid scenes of savage cruelty, it can no longer boast the noble and generous principles which dignify a soldier ; no longer sympathise with the dignity of the royal banner, nor feel ‘ the pride, pomp, circumstance of glorious war, that make ambition virtue ! ’ What makes ambition virtue ? the sense of honour. But is the sense of honour consistent with a spirit of plunder, or the practice of murder ? Beside these murderers and plunderers, let me ask our ministers, what other allies have they acquired ? What other powers have they associated to their cause ? Have they entered into alliance with the King of the Gypsies ? Nothing is too low or too ludicrous to be consistent with their counsels ! ”

Lord Chatham then explicitly stated his repugnance to the independence of America. He would sanction, with his warmest wishes, the struggle of free and virtuous patriots against arbitrary exactions, but a claim of independency, and total disconnection from

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England, as an Englishman, he could not approve: it was incompatible with the mutual happiness and prosperity of both. America derived assistance and protection from us; and we reaped from her the most important advantages; she was, indeed, the fountain of our wealth, the nerve of our strength, the nursery and basis of our naval power. "It is our duty therefore," he said, "most seriously to endeavour the recovery of these most beneficial subjects: and in this perilous crisis alone can we hope for success, while America is in ill-humour with France, on some points that have not entirely answered her expectations. Let us wisely take advantage of the moment: the natural disposition of America still leans toward England; to the old habits of connection and mutual interest that united both countries.

"I mean to propose a cessation of hostilities, as the first step toward so desirable a work. If this measure is approved, I shall suggest a committee to consider of immediate measures for empowering commissioners to treat on specific terms: and if America should prove deaf to all reasonable overtures, in which the preservation of the act of navigation should be the basis, then it will remain to consider the properest compulsory measures. I think I might safely pledge myself that such an offer would not fail to succeed. Faction reigns in some part of America, and, probably, some who compose that faction would not swerve from the claim of independency. The middle colonies are more temperate, and they, and those to the southward, if they had the security now mentioned, would gladly return to their former state. It may be objected that no security is offered on either hand for performance of the stipulations, should the troops be withdrawn, or the levies disbanded. Security is to be obtained not by any declarations of right here, or assertions of it there, but barely by operative acts here, consented to, acknowledged, and ratified by the several assemblies in America."

Lord Chatham denied the disposition of foreign

powers to be pacific and friendly, drew a deplorable picture of the weak and unprepared condition of the country. “ Not five thousand troops in England ! Hardly three thousand in Ireland ! Scarcely twenty ships of the line fully or sufficiently manned for any admiral of reputation to command. The river of Lisbon in possession of our enemies ! The seas swept by American privateers : our channel torn to pieces by them ! Weakness at home and calamity abroad, terrified and insulted by the neighbouring powers, unable to act in America, or acting only to be destroyed ! Where is the man, with the forehead to promise or hope for success in such a situation, or, from perseverance in the measures that have driven us to it ? Who has the forehead to do so ? Where is the man ? I should be glad to see his face.

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“ You cannot conciliate America by your present measures ; you cannot subdue her by any measures. What then can you do ? You cannot conquer, you cannot gain, but you can address ; you can lull the fears and anxieties of the moment into an ignorance of the danger that should produce them. But the time demands the language of truth ; we must not now apply the flattering unction of servile compliance, or blind complaisance. To support a just and necessary war, to maintain the rights or honour of my country, I would strip the shirt from my back : but in such a war as this, unjust in its principle, impracticable in its means, and ruinous in its consequences, I would not contribute a single effort, nor a single shilling. I do not call for vengeance on the heads of those who have been guilty ; I only recommend retreat ; let them walk off, and let them make haste, or speedy and condign punishment will overtake them. We have been deceived and deluded too long ; but let us now stop short : this is the crisis, may be the only crisis of time and situation to give us a possibility of escape from the fatal effects of our delusions. But if, with an obstinate and infatuated perseverance in folly, we meanly echo back the peremptory words this day presented to us, nothing

CHAP. can save this devoted country from complete and final
 XXXII. ruin. We madly rush into multiplied miseries, and
 1777. 'confusion worse confounded.' ²

A long and vehement debate ensued ; but the exalted character of the Speaker, his venerable age, and impressive dignity of manner, occasioned those who widely dissented from his opinions, to treat him with profound and flattering respect. Lord Sandwich, expressing all these sentiments, asserted, that when the matter urged by Lord Chatham should be separated from his manner and oratorical powers, it would be found to contain nothing that could influence the House to refuse the address. He displayed the state of the navy in advantageous terms, overbalanced British losses by enumerating captures from the enemy, and contended, that should France and Spain entertain hostile dispositions, the British force was far superior to any they could muster. France did not afford unbounded assistance to the Americans ; but, in compliance with remonstrances of the English court, had issued ordinances forbidding American privateers to enter their ports, and compelled the restitution of prizes. Unjustifiable transactions might have taken place, but the time was not yet come for demanding full reparation. He readily agreed in Lord Chatham's basis of conciliation, the supremacy of the mother-country, and the act of navigation ; but did not believe His Lordship was so sanguine as to expect the acquiescence in them : the majority of those who would vote with him, would not adopt those sentiments.

The assertions of the sufficiency of the navy did not meet with implicit belief ; and the first lord of the admiralty was cautioned, that he made them at his peril, and was answerable for their truth. Lord Camden analyzed the whole conduct of the war, declaring that if hostilities were prosecuted to the issue of this alternative, shall America be subdued, or shall she render herself independent ? he should favour inde-

² In abridging this speech, I have incorporated the report published in the parliamentary register, with that preserved by Hugh Boyd. See his works, vol. i. p. 283.

pendence, because success in such a war would not only subjugate America, but enslave England.

In this discussion, the supporters of the amendment shewed such diversities of opinion among themselves, as rendered the defence of administration not difficult. Respecting the independence of America, they could form no common principle of concord: the hopes and terms of submission were equally doubtful; the prospects of obedience, and limits of concession, were not accurately defined, and Lord Chatham was successfully assailed on the difference of his present opinions from those he had maintained in the last session, on the dignified position which Great Britain ought to assume, if French interference were so much as intimated.

In one point, the lords in opposition were in perfect accord; they declaimed, with uniform violence, on the employment of savages, and arming slaves against their masters. The Duke of Richmond styled the inhumanity of the war shocking to every feeling of a Christian and a man; it claimed the vengeance of the Deity: the savages would not only torture and kill, but literally eat their prisoners. The ferocity and licentiousness of foreign and Indian auxiliaries would corrupt the soldiers of Britain. Such an army, on its return, might totally subvert the remains of freedom. If disbanded, the soldiers would become a lawless banditti; if kept together, a most dangerous weapon in the hands of ministers, who had shewn so little regard to the rights of freemen.

Lord Chatham approved these observations. "The House, the parliament, the nation at large," he said, "ought to have the opportunity of clearing themselves of that heavy load of black and bloody imputed guilt, under which they suffer. I pledge myself to set on foot an enquiry into the state of the nation; and as one of its leading objects, I shall endeavour to discover who were the authors and advisers of letting loose those blood-hounds and hell-hounds, the savages of America, upon our brethren. I hope to stamp a proper mark both on the illegality and inhumanity of this

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Observations
on the em-
ployment of
savages in
war.

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Defended
by Lord
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speech of
Lord
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satanic measure; and, I trust, I shall have the pious assistance of the sacred bench, and the no less constitutional and efficacious aid of the sages of the law, to drag the authors into broad day-light, and inflict the most exemplary and condign punishment."

Lord Suffolk repeated, that the Americans had emissaries among the savages, and would gain them if we did not; and it was perfectly justifiable, in such a war, to use every means that God and nature had put into our hands.

"I am astonished," Lord Chatham exclaimed, indignantly rising. "I am shocked to hear such principles confessed, to hear them avowed in this House, or in this country: principles equally unconstitutional, inhuman, and unchristian! My lords, I did not intend to have encroached on your attention; but I cannot repress my indignation, I feel myself impelled by every duty; we are called upon as members of this House, as men, as Christian-men, to protest against such notions standing near the throne, polluting the ear of majesty. 'That God and nature put into our hands:' I know not what ideas that lord may entertain of God and nature, but I know that such abominable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What! attribute the sacred sanction of God and nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping knife, to the cannibal savage, torturing, murdering, roasting, and eating—literally, mylords, eating the mangled victims of his barbarous battles! Such horrible notions shock every sentiment of honour; they shock me as a lover of honourable war, and a detester of murderous barbarity. These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand the most decisive indignation. I call upon the right reverend bench, those holy ministers of the gospel, and pious pastors of our church: I conjure them to join in the holy work, and vindicate the religion of their God: I appeal to the wisdom and the law of this learned bench, to defend and support the justice of their country. I call upon the bishops to interpose the unsullied sanction of

their lawn ; upon the learned judges to interpose the purity of their ermine, to save us from this pollution : I call upon the honour of your lordships, to reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own : I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country, to vindicate the national character : I invoke the genius of the constitution ! From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor of this noble lord^b, frowns with indignation at the disgrace of his country. In vain he led your victorious fleets against the boasted armada of Spain ; in vain he defended and established the honour, the liberties, the religion, the Protestant religion of this country, against the arbitrary cruelties of Popery, and the inquisition : if these more than popish cruelties, and inquisitional practices, are let loose among us ; to turn forth into our settlements, among our ancient connections, friends and relations, the merciless cannibal, thirsting for the blood of man, woman, and child ! to send forth the infidel savage, against whom ? against your Protestant brethren ; to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their name and race ; with these horrible hell-hounds of savage war ! hell-hounds, I say, of savage war. Spain armed herself with blood-hounds to extirpate the wretched natives of America ; and we improve on the inhuman example of Spanish cruelty ; we turn loose these savage hell-hounds against our brethren and countrymen in America, of the same language, laws, liberties, and religion ; endeared to us by every tie that could sanctify humanity. This awful subject, so important to our honour, our constitution, and our religion, demands the most solemn and effectual enquiry : and I again call upon your lordships, and the united powers of the state, to examine it thoroughly and decisively, and to stamp upon it an indelible stigma of public abhorrence. And I again implore those holy prelates of our religion, to do away those iniquities from among us. Let them

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^b Lord Effingham. — Lord Effingham Howard was lord high-admiral of England against the Spanish Armada ; the destruction of which is represented in the tapestry.

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perform a lustration ; let them purify this House, and this country, from this sin. My lords, I am old and weak, and at present unable to say more : but my feelings and my indignation were too strong to have said less ; I could not have slept this night in my bed, nor reposed my head on my pillow, without giving this vent to my eternal abhorrence of such preposterous and enormous principles.”^c

A conversation ensued, in which it was proved by the avowal of Lord Townshend and Lord Amherst, that Indians were employed in the last war, both by the French and English ; but Lord Chatham, while he allowed the fact, denied that the measure had been authorised by administration.

Amendment
rejected.

Debate in
the House of
Commons.

28th Nov.
Committee
on the state
of the nation
appointed
by the House
of Lords.
2d Dec.

The amendment was rejected^d, and a short unimportant protest was signed by only two peers.

In the House of Commons the address was moved by Lord Hyde, and seconded by Sir Gilbert Elliot ; the amendment by the Marquis of Granby and Lord John Cavendish : the members of opposition no longer persevered in their secession, but the debate afforded no circumstance of peculiarity distinguishing it from that in the Upper House.^e

At the request of the Duke of Richmond, the House of Lords was called on a motion for a committee to enquire into the state of the nation. In support of this proposition, the Duke observed, that all military events must equally contribute to render a termination of the present ruinous war desirable. Should brilliant successes annihilate American resistance, we must still be sorry to see Englishmen under the edge of the sword, and governed by military power. Disgrace would only confirm the frequent predictions, that to reduce America by force of arms was impossible ; but alternate failures and indecisive successes would be attended with worse consequences by tempting further trials, and exhausting the nation still more in a contest which, from the nature of things, could not prosper. The

^c From Boyd's Works, vol. i. p. 305.

^d 84 to 28.

^e The division was 243 to 86.

enquiry would be extensive; it included every topic, and would be open to all. The peculiar, though not exclusive, objects in view were to state to the nation the expense of blood and treasure already incurred; to enquire into the conduct of the war, and the measures adopted for restoring peace. He fixed the second of February for the discussion, and that sufficient information might be obtained, moved for a number of papers relative to the army, navy, and colonies, to which the Duke of Grafton added one for an account of the national debt during the seven preceding years. Most of these motions were granted without opposition, and the Duke of Richmond returned thanks for the ready compliance, declaring that his eagerness to allow merit was not exceeded by his determination to express censure when information was withheld.

On the same day, Mr. Fox introduced a similar proposition pointing to the same objects. Many collateral enquiries, he said, would arise, and if it should appear that the nation was in a bad state, and the late and present measures of administration had reduced it to the extremity of which he was apprehensive, a new system must be adopted, and new ministers appointed; but, if the contrary, the present system should be continued, and the present ministers remain in power; for none, he was assured, but the present ministers, could prosecute the present system.

The motion for a committee was carried without a division: but Lord North opposed a subsequent demand for papers, alleging the impropriety of making discoveries prejudicial to the true interests of the country.

Mr. Burke complimented the minister's candour and generosity in agreeing to the first motion; but compared his subsequent conduct to that of a man who executes a bond, but inserts a defeasance with a power of revocation, retracting every grant he had made. This conduct reminded him of the situation of Sancho Panza in the government of Barataria; a table plentifully provided was placed before him,

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Papers
granted.

Similar com-
mittee ap-
pointed by
the House
of Commons.

CHAP. but on various pretences every dish was removed,
 XXXII. and the unfortunate governor obliged to dispense
 with his dinner.

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Mr. Dunning contended in favour of the demand; and the Attorney-general was answering his arguments, when intelligence was circulated in a whisper, that the very papers in question were granted on the motion of the Duke of Richmond. Mr. Thurlow was for a moment disconcerted, but declared, whatever might be the conduct of ministers, he, as a member of parliament, never would give his vote for making public the circumstances of a negotiation during its progress.

Lord North, somewhat irritated at a triumphant laugh which prevailed among the members of opposition, said, "Whatever effect the anecdote might have on the House, he should adhere to his former opinion. It was disorderly to mention the decisions of the lords in order to influence the determination of the commons; who, as an independent body, should not change their sentiments on a mere unauthenticated report."

Colonel Barré bantered the Minister on the unusual circumstance of losing his temper; and Mr. Fox said, the only argument against complying with his motion was invalidated by the resolution of the Upper House: the disclosure of a secret negotiation was no longer to be dreaded, for no secret could now be kept. He would not recede from the literal extent of his motion.^f

^f In the course of this speech, Mr. Fox, with considerable pleasantry, compared Lord George Germaine to Dr. Sangrado. "For two years that a certain noble Lord has presided over American affairs," he said, "the most violent scalping tomahawk measures have been pursued: bleeding has been his only prescription. If a people deprived of their ancient rights are grown tumultuous — bleed them! If they are attacked with a spirit of insurrection — bleed them! If their fever should rise into rebellion --- bleed them! cries this state physician: more blood! more blood! still more blood! When Dr. Sangrado had persevered in a similar practice of bleeding his patients, killing by the very means he used for a cure, his man took the liberty to remonstrate on the necessity of relaxing in a practice to which thousands of their patients had fallen sacrifices, and which was beginning to bring their names into disrepute. The doctor answered, I believe we have indeed carried the matter a little too far, but you must know I have written a book on the efficacy of this practice; therefore, though every patient we have should die by it, we must continue the bleeding for the credit of my book."

The debate assumed a new complexion from a judicious speech by Governor Pownall. He thought the papers, from the commission down to the lowest draft, unworthy of attention, so far as respected the subject of peace. Even the act of parliament was of no import to that point; for it did not empower government to treat with the Americans but as subjects. Enquiries had been made whether Lord Howe had power to treat; or did the Americans refuse? Lord Howe could have no powers to negotiate on the only ground which they insisted on taking, and which they resolutely maintained not only then but five months afterward. When General Howe had finished his campaign of 1776, the congress instructed their commissioners at the several courts in Europe to give assurances, that notwithstanding "the artful and insidious endeavours of the British court, to represent the inhabitants of the United States as having a disposition again to submit to the sovereignty of England, it was their determination, at all events, to maintain their independence." Declaring himself as much uninfluenced by party connections, as he had been nine years ago, when he predicted the precise progress of American resistance, he said, "I now tell this House and government, that the Americans never will return to their subjection. Sovereignty is abolished and gone for ever; and the navigation act annihilated. Of what use then are these papers? Of what import our debates? Disputation and abuse may afford amusement; but neither America nor England can be benefited by such discussions in this pressing crisis. Until the House shall be disposed to treat with the United States as independent, sovereign people, schemes or plans of conciliation, whoever may suggest them, will be found unimportant."

The papers were refused.⁵

Papers
refused.

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26th Nov.
Estimates.3d Dec.
Debate in
the House of
Commons on
the loss of
Burgoyne's
army.

Early attention was paid to the estimates : the number of seamen was fixed at sixty thousand, and the troops to be employed in America at fifty-five thousand. These votes were not passed without severe animadversions on the mode of conducting every branch of the service.

During one of these debates, Colonel Barré interrogated the American secretary of state, what, upon his honour, was become of General Burgoyne and his brave troops ; and whether he had not received, by expresses from Quebec, information of his having surrendered, with his whole army ?

Lord George Germaine professed his desire to give the most early and authentic intelligence of any transaction within his knowledge ; and though the recital must give him pain, he avowed the receipt of expresses from Quebec, with the unhappy intelligence ; it was, however, unauthenticated, and he could not declare it officially. He hoped the House would suspend their judgment both on the general and the minister. He was ready to submit his conduct in planning the expedition to investigation : if it appeared impotent, weak, and injurious, let the censure fall on him.

Colonel Barré thundered forth an invective against the cool and easy manner in which the secretary of state related the fate of the brave Burgoyne, and his assurance in insinuating, that a portion of censure might be imputed to the general. The man who planned the inconsistent, impracticable expedition, was alone to blame ; it was unworthy of a British minister, and rather too absurd for an Indian chief. This precedent was followed by Mr. James Luttrell, Mr. Burke, Mr. T. Townshend, and Mr. Fox.

The solicitor-general reconciled the country gentlemen to the disaster, by appealing to British magnanimity in distress ; the certain harbinger of victory.

Misfortunes equally discouraging had in former times produced substantial advantages: at Brihuega, General Stanhope was forced to surrender himself and his army prisoners of war; yet the disgrace only served to raise an enthusiastic ardour, which soon effaced the stigma.

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Lord North declared, that no man had, from the beginning, been more sincerely desirous of peace; if the surrender of his place and honours would obtain it, he would cheerfully resign them; he had reluctantly accepted his station, but while in possession he would support it to the best of his power. He recalled the attention of the House to the business of the day, by observing, that whether the desire of peace or war prevailed, the present supply was absolutely necessary.

Lord Chatham introduced the subject in the House of Lords, by descanting on the difference of the speech which opened the session, and the intelligence which had followed. He had the last speech from the throne in his hand, and a deep sense of the public calamity in his heart: they would co-operate to enforce and justify the measure he meant to propose. He was concerned to say, the speech contained an unfaithful picture: it exhibited a specious outside, full of hopes; while in fact all foreign and domestic transactions were full of danger, and calculated to inspire melancholy forebodings. It was customary to offer addresses of condolence on public misfortune, as well as of congratulation on public success, and he never recollects a period at which such an address could be more seasonable or necessary. He lamented the disaster of General Burgoyne; he might, or might not, be an able officer; but probably his fate was not proportioned to his merit: he might have received orders which he could not execute. Neither should ministers be prematurely condemned; they might have given wise instructions, which, although faithfully and judiciously fulfilled, had miscarried. Many events can-

5th Dec.
Debate in
the House
of Lords.

CHAP. not be provided against by the greatest human foresight, and on that ground he meant to frame his motion. The system introduced within the last fifteen years at St. James's, of breaking all connexion, and extinguishing all principle, had enabled a few men to acquire ascendancy where no personal ascendancy should exist. Thus, to pliable men, not capable men, was the government of this once glorious empire intrusted. The spirit of delusion had gone forth ; the ministers had imposed on the people ; parliament had been induced to sanctify the imposture. False lights had been held out ; the country gentlemen had been seduced to support a most destructive war, under an impression that the land-tax would be diminished, by an American revenue. The visionary phantom, thus conjured up for the basest of purposes, that of deception, was now about to vanish. The King's speech abounded with absurdity and contradiction. In one part it recommended vigorous measures, pointing to conquest, or unconditional submission ; while in another it pretended that peace was the real object, as soon as the deluded multitude should return to their allegiance. This was the grossest and most insolent delusion. By this strange mixture of firmness and pretended candour, of cruelty and mercy, of justice and iniquity, this infatuated nation had been misled.

After retracing much of the ground occupied by his former speeches, and insisting that the plan of penetrating into the colonies from Canada was a most wild, uncombined, and mad project, he dwelt in exaggerated terms on the importance of America. Those colonies, he argued, had occasioned the rise in the value of estates ; had been the great support of this country ; had produced millions ; afforded soldiers and sailors ; given our manufacturers employment, and enriched our merchants. Ministers had insidiously betrayed the country into a war with America ; and what were the fruits ? Let the sad catastrophe of Burgoyne speak.

His Lordship, in a digression, adverted to the language held in print, and in that House by a most reverend prelate^h, reprobated the tory principles he had maintained ; and trusted he should yet see the day when those pernicious doctrines would be considered and treated as libellous ; they were the doctrines of Atterbury and Sacheverel ; as a whig he should never endure them ; and doubted not the author would suffer due censure and punishment. He concluded by moving an address for copies of all orders and instructions to General Burgoyne.

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This motion was rejected on two grounds ; first, the intelligence, though it had every appearance of authenticity, was not official ; secondly, the disclosure of all instructions to General Burgoyne might betray transactions not proper to be revealed, and prove materially injurious to individuals. If it was true that the General was prisoner, the terms of his release were equally true ; and his return to England might be daily expected. His own account would throw more light on the subject, than the most ample information in the power of ministers to afford, and would be obtained in a shorter time than would be requisite to select and arrange the papers demanded.

On the rejection of this propositionⁱ, Lord Chatham moved for copies of all orders and treaties relative to the employment of Indian savages, and of the instructions given by General Burgoyne to General St. Leger. The numerous invectives against the use of these auxiliaries, vented since the beginning of the session, had excited great personal rancour, and the debate was conducted with unusual acrimony. Earl Gower having accused the mover of inconsistency, in reprobating measures which he had sanctioned in the last reign ; Lord Chatham denied that he had ever, in his official capacity, authorized the

Lord
Chatham's
motion on
the employ-
ment of
savages.

^h The archbishop of York.

ⁱ The numbers were 40 to 19.

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employ of savages ; and George II. he believed, had too much regard for the military dignity of his people, and too much humanity, to agree to such a proposal. He accused Lord Gower of quibbling, and spoke contemptuously of his means of information. What right had he to comment on political proceedings ? Where was he when these transactions were conducting ? Immersed in pleasure, and indulging in all the variety of dissipation, to which young noblemen were too apt to devote themselves.

Lord Gower retorted these unwarrantable liberties of speech, with great heat ; the insinuations, he said, were illiberal, unmanly, and untrue. In support of his assertion relative to Lord Chatham's ministerial conduct, he produced from the journals of the House, the recognition of a treaty with an Indian nation, one condition of which was, that they should kill and scalp every Frenchman who came within their country ; and the French, he observed, were not more hostile than the rebellious inhabitants of America.

This altercation was of long duration : the warmth of Lord Gower was more than adequately encountered by the polished raillery and dignified sarcasm of his antagonist ; but the fact in debate was incontestably ascertained. Lord Amherst reluctantly avowed, that he followed the example of the French in employing savages, which he would not have done, without the sanction of express orders, which, with His Majesty's permission, he had no objection to produce. Lord Shelburne contended, that the orders might have proceeded from the board of trade, in whom the superintendance of such treaties was vested ; but this presumptive apology was invalidated by Lord Denbigh, who calling Lord Chatham the great oracle with the short memory, observed, it could never have happened that he, who, when minister, had always contended for guidance and direction, should permit such an intrusion in the affairs of his own office.

Lord Dunmore placed the exertions of the Americans in Virginia to employ the Indians beyond a doubt, by relating the particulars of a conference between their agents, and some of the tribes, when in answer to their propositions, an indignant chief exclaimed, "What! shall we fight against the great king over the water, who in the last war sent such large armies, and so much money here, to defend you from the devastations of the French, and from our attacks? No; if you have so little gratitude, we will not assist so base a purpose. The Virginians," he added, "thus disappointed, dressed some of their own people like Indians, with a view to terrify the forces under my command, and I heartily wish more Indians were employed; as the Americans far exceed them in barbarity." He then adduced many instances to prove that the colonists did not even affect humanity, but were most industriously cruel, most wantonly inhuman.

Lord Chatham's motion was negatived.^k

After the transaction of some ordinary business and the discussion of several motions, framed only for the purpose of embarrassing administration, an adjournment, till the twentieth of January, was moved by Lord Beauchamp, but strongly objected to. A recess of six weeks was considered highly improper, in so critical a situation, and members should be ashamed to face their constituents, after voting a neglect of their interests at this momentous period. Mr. Burke proposed, as an amendment, to adjourn only for a week. The reply of ministers was short: they had transacted all the usual business, and felt no apprehensions from foreign powers, no material progress could be made in the field, or in negotiation; and if any matter of importance could be suggested, the committee on the state of the nation, to whom it should be addressed, would not sit till February.

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Negatived,
10th Dec.

Adjourn-
ment of
the House of
Commons.

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11th Dec.
In the House
of Lords.

These reasons prevailed, and the amendment was negatived.¹

The motion for adjournment was no less strenuously opposed in the Upper House. Lord Chatham, with grief and astonishment, heard it made at a time when the affairs of the country presented prospects full of awe, terror, and impending danger; when events of a most alarming tendency, little expected or foreseen, would shortly happen; when a cloud was ready to burst and overwhelm the nation in ruin. Could parliament trust, during an adjournment of six weeks, to men who had occasioned such calamities, when perhaps the utter overthrow of the kingdom was plotting, nay ripe for execution, without almost a possibility of prevention? A remonstrance should be carried to the throne. The King was deluded by his ministers; they were deceived by false information, or sanctioned suppositions which they knew to be untrue. He treated at large of the necessity of domestic defence, intimating the certainty of approaching danger, and descended with force on the impracticability of reducing America; the delusive speculations on that subject; the fate of General Burgoyne's army; the magnanimity of the victors; the numerous perils which threatened the kingdom; and the probability that, before the expiration of six weeks, the noble earl, who proposed the adjournment, would have just cause to repent of his motion.

The adjournment was vindicated on the same grounds as in the House of Commons, with the additional argument, that as that branch of the legislature had acceded to the recess, no advantage could accrue from a protracted sitting of the Lords; the motion was carried.^m

State of the
public mind.

During the recess, both ministerial and opposition parties displayed an earnest disposition to conciliate the public, and secure the success of their future at-

tempts by popularity. The sensation occasioned by the protraction of American resistance, and the unfavourable intelligence recently received, presented some means of making impressions unfavourable to administration, which were eagerly embraced. Before the meeting of parliament, the public began to long for peace; the alarms excited during the early part of the session, increased that inclination to a pitch which seemed to demand gratification without regard to terms; the mortifying disaster of General Burgoyne, for a time, increased the clamourⁿ, but the predictions of ministers, that the public spirit would insure a remedy for this calamity^o, were speedily verified. The nation seemed anxious to shake off the turpitude of depression. Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, each raised a regiment; and several independent companies were levied in Wales. The livery of London, and corporation of Bristol, refused to co-operate in these laudable efforts; but the liberality of individuals compensated for the caution of the chartered bodies; large sums were subscribed for completing these patriotic levies, and fifteen thousand soldiers were by private bounty presented to the state.^p

The stores of benevolence were not all poured out in the cause of the country: a complaint was made, and became the subject of a motion in the House of Lords, that the American prisoners were treated with savage inhumanity in British prisons. The state of captives ever affords ready grounds of complaint; and the manners of jailors are rarely calculated to repel, by presumptive evidence, the facts adduced; yet although some slight instances of ill-treatment, resulting rather from habitual carelessness than malignant design, might be substantiated, it was not even insinuated that Government ordered or warranted the

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Subscription
for raising
regiments.

Subscription
for the Amer-
ican pri-
soners.
11th Dec.

ⁿ See Gibbon's Posthumous Works, vol. i. p. 529, 530.

^o See Lords' Debates, 5th December 1777.

^p History of Lord North's Administration, p. 295.

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Conduct of
France.

March.

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wanton exercise of power, either in regard to food, fuel, or personal treatment. To alleviate these distresses, a subscription was promoted with all the zeal of party ; the sum raised was not abundant, but the complaints immediately ceased : the subject was afterward slightly noticed by Lord Abingdon, who, on a short explanation, withdrew his motion.^a

Lord Chatham's intimations of the hostile negotiations in France, the dissatisfaction of the American agents, and the possibility of still averting the junction of the colonies with the natural enemy of Britain, were well founded ; although his advice to prevent the independency of America was not practicable. During the whole summer, the prevalence of the American cause became more and more discernible in France and in all countries connected with her. Exultation at every event which could be considered favourable to America, and injurious to Great Britain, was open and undisguised. In the preceding spring, Arthur Lee, formerly agent from America in London, was dispatched by the commissioners of congress to Vienna, for the purpose of being introduced, under the sanction of the French ambassador, to the Austrian minister, and of arranging a treaty, or at least purchasing warlike stores. The connexion between the Americans and France was not sufficiently intimate to make the French ambassador insist on his reception among people of distinction ; he therefore, after a short stay, pursued his route to Prague, Dresden, and Berlin. In the autumn, however, his return with an authenticated commission was publicly mentioned ; and notwithstanding the repugnance expressed by Prince Kaunitz, the Austrian minister, to receive a man whom he described as a diplomatic adventurer, M. de Breteuil, the French ambassador, pressed his introduction with irresistible perseverance, and obtained for him some slight public notice ; though all his address was unable to conquer the inflexibility of the empress-queen and the

^a See debates in the House of Lords, 2d March 1778.

Emperor, or to obtain from Kaunitz more than the C H A P. gloomy civility of a silent bow.

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These transactions were rather vexatious to the British ambassador, than important in themselves; but the conduct of the French ambassador, as well as all corresponding circumstances, strongly impressed a belief, that hostilities against England were only deferred, till success should confirm the independence of America, and render the espousal of her cause less insecure. The contest between Spain and Portugal had afforded to France an unexceptionable opportunity of augmenting her marine establishment; and in the usual style, preparatory to hostilities, she began to complain of injuries and insults from British cruizers, and to disseminate reports of an inevitable rupture.

The capture of General Burgoyne's army gave a decisive turn to the counsels of Versailles; the cause of America, gilded by prosperity, was enthusiastically revered by the people; the anti-pacific party gained the ascendancy in the cabinet; and a treaty was entered into, though not yet publicly avowed, nor perhaps all the terms definitively arranged; but extensive military preparations in the ports of France, produced corresponding efforts in England.

Treaty with America signed.

These circumstances were in part adverted to in the King's speech, but the ministry were yet obliged to await events, without appearing to notice their progress. No overt act of hostility justified a declaration of war; nor were any reasonable prospects held out for regaining America at a less price than the sacrifice of every object of contention.

The levy of troops by subscription was the first important object which claimed the attention of parliament. Sir Phillip Jennings Clerke moved for an account of the number raised, and the names of the commanding officers.

22d Jan.
Debates on
raising
troops by
subscrip-
tion.

In the debate the minister was severely censured for the length of the recess, while engaged in so momentous a measure as that of equipping fifteen

CHAP. thousand men, without consent of parliament; a precedent which would justify the unconstitutional incorporation of an indefinite number. He was compared to Pericles, who, exhausted with misfortune, wasted with disease, and lingering in pain, walked abroad, bedecked with amulets, charms, and saws of old women. The loan, unfilled and unpaid, was his disease; and the charitable contributions, his amulets and charms. Voluntary donations might be fairly interpreted as proofs of a people's affection, but were no less indicative of their real poverty. Private and public life exhibited pregnant proofs, that solicitations on one hand, or benevolences on the other, were the common effects of pride, penury, and pity. Persons might be mean from choice, naked from madness; but rags discovered an involuntary meanness, or a poverty willing to be concealed.

The minister insisted that no contempt was thrown on the parliament, nor any violation of the constitution committed; that the American war was just and popular, and the offers to the crown perfectly constitutional. The Americans denied the right of the supreme legislature, and maintained their cause by arms; a loyal part of His Majesty's subjects, abhorring such an unnatural rebellion, had, in proof of those sentiments, offered their persons and purses in support of the constitutional rights of their country. The motion was granted.

4th and 5th
Feb.

Sir Phillip Jennings Clerke repeated his objections to the conduct of Government, when supplies were demanded for clothing the new troops; and the debate was renewed on the report of the committee. Several members of opposition indulged in scurrilous reflections against the people of Scotland, and blamed the appointment of officers, in which the forms of military service had been violated. The subscriptions were said to be filled by expectants, contractors, merchants, and manufacturers, who had their own separate interests in view, and converted public spirit

into a job. The right to raise troops by private donations, it was contended, must justify maintaining them ; in such a case it would be in the power of a bad king, and a bad parliament, to apply the money thus raised to the utter subversion of the constitution. This mode of obtaining money for the King's use was a breach of the coronation oath, and all who subscribed were abettors of perjury.

Government was justified by precedent, several regiments, independent companies, and corps, having been raised in 1745 and 1759 ; and the subscribers on the latter occasion, instead of being treated as violators of the law, were publicly and solemnly thanked by the then minister, Lord Chat-ham, and applauded by the public. That great man, Lord Hardwicke, had also highly approved of procuring men from Scotland : the prevalence of a contrary opinion would have prevented the recruiting of the army, frustrated the hopes of success, and diminished the resources of the country.

The freeholders of Norfolk founded on these levies a petition to the House of Commons ; and, at an advanced period of the Session, Mr. Wilkes moved to bring in a bill for preventing the dangerous and unconstitutional practice of giving or granting money to the crown, as a private aid, loan, benevolence, or subscription, for public purposes, without consent of parliament. The proposition was ably supported by Mr. Burke, but negatived on a division.

In the Upper House, the Earl of Abingdon made a motion for obtaining an opinion of the twelve judges, on the legality of raising troops without the authority of parliament ; but after a long discussion, it was withdrawn at the instance of his friends.

The Earl made his grand attack, by moving that the grant of money, in private aids or benevolences,

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17th Feb.
Norfolk pe-
tition.
2d April
Wilkes's
motion.

23d and
27th Jan.
Lord Ab-
ingdon's
motion.

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without the sanction of parliament, for the purpose of raising armies, was repugnant to the constitution and the law ; and that to obtain money by subscription for such purposes, was unconstitutional and illegal, an infringement of the rights and breach of the privileges of parliament. His speech was desultory, and so abusive, that Earl Gower remarked, such language had never before been heard in either House. Lord Abingdon retraced the arguments against consulting the judges, and seemed to point his sarcasms against the chief justice of the King's Bench. The present levy, he contended, was no less illegal and repugnant to the spirit, if not the letter of the bill of rights, than the demand of ship-money, in the days of Charles I. Tories, Jacobites, and Scotchmen, the first addressers for abrogating the liberties of three millions of subjects in America, were now the first to take up arms ; common sense warranted the inference, that something more than mere loyalty to the House of Hanover actuated such measures.

Lord Hardwick's opinion, delivered on the trial of the rebel Lords Kilmarnock, Cromartie, and Balmerino, in 1746, wherein that great oracle of the law treated such objections as the offspring of ignorance and presumption, was read in answer to these observations, and an amendment moved, declaring the voluntary subscriptions legal, and highly meritorious.

Against this amendment it was urged, that it unfairly withdrew the original proposition from debate, and prevented the decision of the House, by raising another topic of discussion, not tending to place out of doubt the principal subject. Lord Mansfield, though he proved the practice of moving such amendments consonant to usage, recommended that for candour's sake, it should be withdrawn, and his advice was followed. He then urged, in an animated and impressive manner, the arguments drawn from law and precedent in favour of the practice ; and, after a short

reply from Lord Camden, the resolutions were negatived.^s C H A P.

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Committee
on the state
of the nation.

In both Houses the greatest attention was fixed on the approaching committee on the state of the nation; the preparatory motions for additional papers, and the arguments by which they were encountered, shewed that both parties looked forward to that discussion, as a crisis of considerable importance.

Mr. Fox opened the business in the House of Commons, by invoking the members not to mix the topics of that day's debate with any previous matter, but to proceed plainly and directly in considering the actual state of the country, and the means by which Great Britain might be delivered from the impending dangers. He wished all would agree in divesting themselves of former opinions, favourite ideas and prejudices, and resume them only as fair results of the present inquiry. He recommended an oblivion of enmity and animosity, a suspension of all sentiments of regard or dislike toward America, and the calm and dispassionate contemplation of that country, as a part, and a very considerable part, of the British empire. He established, as an incontrovertible axiom, that when a country falls, within the short space of a few years, from the highest pinnacle ever attained in ancient or modern times, there must have been some radical error in the government, though radical error was not in itself a proof of ministerial criminality.

He took an historical view of the proceedings relative to America from 1774, and proclaimed the error of ministers in mistaking a single province for a whole continent; Massachuset's Bay for the American empire. Virginia, a colony no less jealous of its rights, nor less warm in asserting them, was forgotten; and the union of any other colony with the Massachuset's was deemed impossible: but whoever

^s 90 to 30.

In the House of Lords, on the 23d, 26th, 29th and 30th of January: in the House of Commons, on the 27th and 29th January, and the 2d of February.

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contended against ten men, when prepared only for one opponent, must encounter greater difficulties than if originally aware of the resisting force. Every attempt to crush an insurrection by means inadequate to the end, foments instead of suppressing it. All the acts of that session, were founded on the same mistake; the Quebec act completed the union of all parties in America; and a few weeks before the arrival of reinforcements, the civil war was begun. After describing the transactions of the British army till the evacuation of Boston, Mr. Fox asked, what was the conduct of America? They sent a petition couched in the most respectful terms, disclaiming independence, and desiring no concession in the least dishonourable to the mother-country, but supplicating the King's paternal interference. To this petition no answer was given; and the ministry even called the petition a farce, and asserted the view of the Americans to be independence. If such was the real aim of congress, and the petition calculated to delude the people of America, as well as those of Great Britain, ministers would have acted more wisely in accepting, and converting it to a test of veracity. Vigorous measures were, however, for the first time, attempted; Sir William Howe was completely reinforced; New York taken; two or three battles gained; but the American army was not extinguished; and the affair of Trenton plainly shewed the impossibility of totally reducing them. On the events of the last campaign he forbore to treat, they demanded separate investigation.

He then inferred, from the papers before the House, that to send more troops out of the kingdom would be highly imprudent. The peace establishment had been seventeen thousand men for Great Britain; twelve thousand for Ireland; three thousand five hundred for Gibraltar; and two thousand three hundred for Minorca, amounting together to thirty-four thousand eight hundred. The conduct of France, the state of public credit, His Majesty's speech at

the opening of the session, sufficiently proved the necessity of preparing for a foreign war; and, if thirty-four thousand men were necessary in time of peace, it could not be proper to retain a less number at the present moment. But, in fact, the number of troops in Great Britain did not exceed fifteen thousand; in Ireland, eight thousand; in Gibraltar and Minorca, five thousand; so that the actual deficiency of the peace establishment was six thousand. It would be madness to part with more of the army: the war was impracticable, and no good could be obtained by force; the lives that had been lost, and the treasures that had been wasted, were ineffectually lavished; it was time to contemplate the domestic situation of the country, and not leave England defenceless to strengthen the army in America. He therefore moved for orders that no more of the old corps should be sent out of the kingdom.

Strangers being excluded from the House, no answer was made to Mr. Fox's speech; but his motion was rejected.^u

The Duke of Richmond, pursuing nearly the same chain of narrative, and the same mode of reasoning with Mr. Fox, founded on it a motion somewhat more dilated in form, but in substance nearly similar.

2d Feb.
Similar motion in the House of Lords.

This motion, it was said, would, if agreed to, amount to a public acknowledgment of inability to prosecute the war, or assert the rights of Great Britain over her colonies, and invite the house of Bourbon to attempt an invasion. If, in fact, (as the motion intended to prove) Great Britain was unable to defend her own territory, or assert her dominion over America, her own weakness should be concealed, not only from foreign states, but from the colonies, now become her rivals in power and commerce. The address would invade, and suspend the inherent prerogative of the crown to raise, direct and employ the military force. The hostile intentions of rival nations were

CHAP. still denied; the courts of Versailles and Madrid gave
XXXII. repeated assurances of pacific dispositions, though
1778. the armaments in their ports justified the King in
recommending to Parliament an augmentation of
the navy. Yet, should every apprehension be
realized, it would be extremely imprudent to invite
war by an ostentation of weakness.

In support of the motion, hostility and invasion
were inferred from all the conduct of France since
1775; the reception of Deane in a public character;
of Dr. Franklin, armed with more complete and ex-
tensive powers; the grant of every substantial effect
of solemn amity and alliance; the trade with the
colonies, the supply of arms, ammunition, clothing,
and officers to discipline the troops, uniformly proved
the real disposition of our ancient enemy. Remon-
strances had been made, promises given, explana-
tions added; but still France persisted in the same
conduct: ordinances were issued, but evaded, alter-
ed, or so modified as to lose their effect. In fine,
France accomplished, by arts of evasion, the first
part of her plan, that of disuniting America from
the mother-country, and giving the colonies that
species of assistance which enabled them to defy
opposition. And notwithstanding the pacific as-
surances, private promises, and public acts, so osten-
tatiouously displayed, l'Orient and Nantz were then
blocked up by a British naval force, for the purpose
of intercepting succours to America, and impeding
that very commerce which the French king, in his
public edicts, pretended to prohibit.

Dependence on a fleet in case of projected inva-
sion was uncertain; winds, tides, and accidents, not
in the governance of human policy, might prevent
naval operations; and France, having always a power-
ful military force in the vicinity of our coasts,
might, in the space of four-and-twenty hours, by
pressing fishing boats and small craft, land so large an
army as to endanger the existence and independence
of the nation. Miserable indeed would be the reli-

ance on an undisciplined militia; where gradations of rank were not observed among the officers, and the privates completed by substitutes. Nor were these perils to be disregarded as distant and doubtful; for the Duke of Grafton positively asserted, that a war with France must take place within three months, unless peace was concluded with America.

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This mode of arguing was decried as tending to invite, what the speakers affected to deprecate, hostility and invasion. The fundamental facts and inferences were strongly denied; France could not collect a sufficient force to make an impression; an armament from Calais would be destroyed by the British fleet in the Downs; and when an invasion from Dunkirk was projected under Marshal Saxe, Lord Sandwich said he had seen whole hogsheads of letters, both from persons resident at Dunkirk, and others serving in the intended expedition, reprobating the folly, absurdity, and impracticability of the attempt, and earnestly wishing it abandoned. The report of a British squadron stationed off Nantz and l'Orient was untrue; and the management of the militia was wisely arranged, substitutes being in general much better and more experienced soldiers than could be obtained by taking tradesmen and artificers from their shops and manufactories.

The motion was negatived. *

The House of Lords did not adopt the regulation of excluding strangers, but the House of Commons continued it on the next sitting of the committee, when Mr. Burke moved for copies of papers relative to the employment of the Indians of America, from March 1774, to January 1778.

6th Feb.
Burke's motion on the employment of savages.

In support of this proposition he made a speech of more than three hours, which is generally applauded as one of his most distinguished efforts, though very inadequately reported. Colonel Barré, mixing some-

* 91 to 34.

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what of the spirit of party with genuine admiration of extraordinary talent, offered, if it were published, to nail it on every church door where he saw the King's proclamation for a fast ; and governor Johnstone rejoiced in the exclusion of strangers, as their indignation and enthusiasm would have impelled them to tear in pieces the two ministerial Lords, North and Germaine. The former grounds of defence urged in behalf of this measure were treated by Mr. Burke as deserving little regard. The fault of employing savages, he said, did not consist in their colour, or their weapons, but in their mode of warfare, which was so horrible as to shock, not only the manners of all civilized people, but far exceed the ferocity of all barbarians mentioned in history. The Indians have two principal objects in war ; the glory of destroying or exterminating their enemies ; and that of procuring the greatest numbers of scalps, to hang up in their huts as trophies of victory, and proofs of prowess. Having no titles, sinecure places, lucrative governments, pensions, or red ribbons to bestow, they reward valour by donations of human scalps, human flesh, and the gratifications arising from torturing, mangling, scalping, and sometimes devouring their captives. They were formidable only from their cruelty ; and those who employed them became chargeable with all their odious and impotent barbarities. No proof was adduced that the Americans had attempted an offensive alliance with any of their tribes, while the papers before the House demonstrated, that the King's ministers had negotiated and obtained such alliances in all parts of the continent.

Mr. Burke ludicrously analysed General Burgoyne's famous speech ; not decrying its sentiments, but the application of them to savages, not more intelligent or likely to be affected, than the wild beasts of the forest. He endeavoured to prove by details of General Burgoyne's, and Colonel St. Leger's expeditions, that the Indians did, in effect, indiscriminately

murder men, women, and children, friends and foes; and that the greatest slaughter fell on those who were best affected to the King's government, and had been disarmed by the provincials; painting in strong colours the story of Miss Macrea.

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1778.

The only possible remedy against the alienation of affection, distrust and terror, created by these measures, was a serious parliamentary inquiry, attended with demonstrations of disapprobation. The colonies would otherwise never believe those who carried on so cruel and dishonourable a war, fit objects of confidence for a sound and cordial peace, and much less to be intrusted with power and dominion.

Governor Pownall agreed there was not so hellish, so unfair an engine of war, as the service of the savage, mixed with the civilized soldier. Humanity and honour had, among civilized nations, defined rights, and given laws to war; laid restraints on havock, and imposed limits to destruction and blood-shed: even in the rigours of war, civilized nations had adopted, and almost universally observed, the *jura belli*. The war of savages, on the contrary, being a contest unregulated by feelings of honour or humanity, was an unrestrained effusion of revenge and blood-thirstiness, ravage, devastation and utter destruction. No justification could be offered for employing Indians, but absolute, unavoidable necessity. The operations of the American war were combined with the nature of the country, more than half a wilderness, and with the interests and nature of the Indians inhabiting that wilderness. No war could be carried on without their interposition; that belligerent power with whom they did not co-operate, they would attack; neutrality was a delusive notion, impracticable in fact, and never adopted by any party, but as a succedaneum, after miscarriage in the attempt to engage them in offensive operations. Such were the politics of the French in the last, and of the congress in the present war: they first endeavoured to engage

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the Indians, but failing, affected to follow the plausible line of neutrality in the temper of moderation and humanity. The necessity of employing them might be avoided ; their voluntary neutrality was nonsense, delusive, dangerous nonsense ; but if both belligerent powers would agree strictly to desist from engaging them, and adopt some stipulation or convention mutually, and in one spirit of good faith not to suffer them to intermeddle, but act against them as enemies, wherever they attempted hostilities, all the horrors, so forcibly depicted, might be prevented, or greatly restrained. If government and parliament would concur in this regulation, and propose to congress such a convention, they would certainly embrace it with sincerity, and execute it with good faith. The measure would be independent of the object of the war ; and yet this spirit, thus aiming to regulate the means of restraining its rigours, might become the first seed of peace. It would facilitate mutual good dispositions, and good offices ; and such a beginning would probably end in peace ; at all events, government would not endanger any of its rights or interests in making the proposal. In conclusion, this intelligent member offered, without commission, pay, or expectation of recompence, personally to attend the congress, and negotiate the arrangement, without committing the dignity of the British crown.

Mr. Burke's motion was rejected, ^y as well as several auxiliary propositions by which it was followed.

Another effort was made by Mr. Fox, to accomplish those regulations of military exertion which the opposition seemed to consider as one of the great objects in obtaining the committee. He moved as a resolution, that in 1774 the land forces serving in North America did not amount to more than six thousand eight hundred and sixty-four men, officers included ; and read eleven other resolutions which stated pro-

11th Feb.
Fox's second
motion re-
specting the
army.

gressively all the reinforcements sent to America since that period, deriving from the whole a deduction, that twenty thousand men had been lost in the contest. If with so great a force so little could be achieved, it was clearly impracticable, by prosecuting the war, either to subdue the Americans or terrify them into obedience. These statements were said, by the friends of administration, to be unfounded on fact, as not more than twelve hundred men had been destroyed in battle; and if the gross deficiency of the army, including those who died natural deaths, deserted, became prisoners, or unfit for service, were published as loss, it would convey information very remote from truth. The resolution was evaded by a motion for leave to report progress.^z

In the House of Lords the committee was employed in the examination of evidence: merchants were called as witnesses, who proved that great loss had ensued to their commercial concerns from the war, and other merchants produced on the part of administration, who shewed that considerable captures had been made, and new and profitable sources of commerce opened since the commencement of hostilities. The Duke of Richmond, who strenuously opposed the production of the latter witnesses, resisted no less the reasonings drawn from their testimony against a series of resolutions which he moved, declaratory of the great maritime and commercial losses sustained by the war. The prizes taken and distributed to British seamen, far from being a balance in our favour, added to our loss; for if we were not at war with America, the value of all these cargoes, in the circuitous course of trade, must centre in Great Britain. The propositions were disposed of by the previous question.^a Other motions made by the Duke of Richmond for declaring the number of troops sent to America, and for ascertaining the expence incurred by the war, occasioned

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1778.

Examina-
tion of
evidence in
the House
of Lords.
9th.

Resolu-
tions
moved by
the Duke of
Richmond.

16th and
19th Fe.

^z 263 to 149.

^a 80 to 32.

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1778.
2d Mar.
Motion by
the Duke of
Bolton
respecting
the navy.

long discussions, and upon each the chairman was directed to leave the chair.

A motion was made by the Duke of Bolton for censuring the naval conduct of the war, by a resolution expressive of the number of ships employed in America since 1774. The debate was generally confined to broad assertions, and resolute contradictions. According to the lords in opposition, the great national bulwark was in a state of shameful neglect ; while the lord at the head of the naval department insisted that it had never been so judiciously administered. The previous question terminated the discussion.^b

17th Feb.
Lord
North's plan
of concili-
ation.

In the mean time Lord North, pursuant to a notice in the committee on the state of the nation, submitted to the House a new plan of conciliation with the colonies. His speech in introducing this measure was long and explicit. He had been uniformly disposed to peace. The coercive acts appeared necessary when they were proposed, but finding them unproductive of the intended effect, he essayed conciliatory measures, before the sword was unsheathed. He then thought (nor was his opinion changed) those propositions capable of forming the happiest, most equitable, and most lasting bond of union between Great Britain and her colonies ; but by a variety of discussions, a plan originally clear and simple, was made to appear so obscure as to go damned to America. Congress conceived, or took occasion to represent it as a scheme for sowing divisions, and introducing a worse species of taxation than had previously existed, and accordingly rejected it. He never expected to derive any considerable revenue from America ; in his opinion they should contribute in a very low proportion to the expences of the state. Few taxes would prove worth the charge of collection ; even the stamp act, the most judicious and most highly estimated, would not have produced a considerable revenue : a confede-

^b In these divisions the majorities always exceeded two to one.

racy against the use of stamps, would have annihilated the produce, while it increased the confusions of the country. He found America already taxed, when he unfortunately came into administration. The act, enabling the East India Company to send teas with the drawback of the whole duty, was a relief instead of an oppression ; but the disaffected and those engaged in contraband trade, endeavoured to represent it as a monopoly. He never intended taxation in the last tea act, nor in the conciliatory proposition, but as a medium of union and concord ; his present proposition would therefore be found consistent with his former conduct.

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One of the bills he designed to move would quiet America on the subject of taxation, dispel all fears, real or pretended, that parliament would attempt to tax them again, and annul the right itself, so far as it regarded revenue. The Americans had desired a repeal of all the acts passed since 1763 : were this requisition granted in its full extent, several statutes, highly beneficial to themselves, granting bounties and premiums, or relaxing former grievous regulations, must be rescinded. The late acts which originated in the quarrel should cease with it ; and commissioners should be authorized to adjust, in a satisfactory manner, all other disputes. The powers granted to former commissioners had been considered more limited than in reality they were : he should take care now to be explicit, granting full authority to discuss and conclude every point, treating with the congress as if it were a legal body, and would so far give it authenticity as if its acts and concessions would bind all America. They should be empowered to treat with provincial assemblies as at present constituted, and with individuals in their actual civil capacities, or military commands ; with General Washington or any other officer : they might suspend hostilities ; intermit the operation of laws ; grant pardons, immunities, and rewards ; restore to colonies

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their ancient constitutions; and nominate governors, counsel, judges, and magistrates, till the King's further pleasure should be known. A renunciation of independence would not be insisted on till the treaty had received final ratification by the King and parliament. The commissioners should be instructed to negotiate for a reasonable and moderate contribution towards the common defence of the empire, when re-united: but to obviate every pretence against terminating this unhappy difference, the contribution should not be insisted on as a *sine qua non* of the treaty.

If such had always been his sentiments with regard to taxation and peace, why, it would be asked, had he not made the proposition at a more early period; his opinion had ever been that the moment of victory was the proper time for offering terms, and at the beginning of the session he had declared those sentiments; he then thought the victories obtained by Sir William Howe more decisive, and was unacquainted with General Burgoyne's misfortune. These terms were in substance the same he would offer in the height of victory; he saw no reason for protracting the war, the effusion of blood, and the immoderate expence, and therefore now offered the same propositions. The events of war had not corresponded with his expectations; but his concessions were from reason and propriety, not necessity. England was in a condition to prosecute the war much longer; new armies could easily be raised, the navy was never in greater strength, and the revenue very little sunk. With these observations he submitted the whole plan, together with the propriety of his past and present conduct, to the judgment of the House.

Approved
by Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox was glad to find the propositions so ample and satisfactory, and believed they would be supported by all those with whom he had the honour to act; they did not differ materially from those of Mr. Burke about three years ago; the same arguments then used by the minority, and nearly in the same

words were now re-produced by Lord North. He wished this concession had been made more early, and on principles more respectful to parliament. To tell them that if they were deceived, they had deceived themselves, was neither kind nor civil to an assembly, which, for so many years, had relied on him with such unreserved confidence. All public bodies, like the House of Commons, must repose ample trust in ministers ; their only method of preventing its abuse was to punish those who had mis-informed them concerning the true state of their affairs, or conducted them with negligence, ignorance, or incapacity. Lord North's arguments on this subject might be all collected into one point, his excuses all reduced into one apology, his total ignorance. He hoped, and was disappointed ; he expected much, and found little to answer his expectations. He thought the Americans would obey his laws ; they resisted. He thought they would submit to his armies ; the armies were beaten by inferior numbers. He made conciliatory propositions, and thought they would succeed ; but they were rejected. He appointed commissioners to make peace, and thought they had powers ; but found they could not make peace, and nobody believed they had any powers. The present proposition deserved support, because much more clear and satisfactory than the last ; for necessity had at length compelled the minister to speak plainly.

The sanction of so great a leader did not prevent several members of opposition from raising objections to Lord North's plan. Little hope could be entertained, they said, of good effect ; for, whatever the Americans might suffer by the continuance of war, they would never receive the olive branch from hands so deeply stained with the blood of their countrymen. If nothing could be gained from their fears, what could the present ministers expect from their affections ? The propositions proved the prosperous condition of American affairs, and the humiliation of Great

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Britain. Although the minister boasted, with an air of fortitude, of the state of the army and navy, would it be believed that those who talked of nothing less than unconditional submission, and bringing America prostrate at their feet, repealed obnoxious acts from any other motive, than a conviction that the strength of the nation was inadequate to the contest? And could it be expected, that, after having resisted and baffled our utmost efforts, the Americans would ever sheath the sword without sufficient security against the repetition of injuries? Would not the breach of the solemn official promise of Lord Hillsborough justify the Americans in declining negotiation with men, who laid the foundation of war in perfidy, and built on it with cruelty? The Americans would not, now the hazard of contest was so nearly past, entrust for a moment, the privileges for which they had ventured their lives and fortunes, in the hands from which they had just rescued them. The motion tended, not to pacify America, but to amuse England by a delusive prospect of reconciliation, and suspend, at least, the vengeance of an injured and insulted public.

23d Feb.
Progress of
the bills
through the
House of
Commons.

These objections produced no effect: two bills were brought in for effecting the purpose suggested in Lord North's speech. In the committee, Serjeant Adair moved that the power of nominating commissioners should be, not in the crown, but in parliament; but the motion was negatived without a division.

24th Feb.

Another debate on the same principle was maintained in the committee, when several friends of government reprobated the renunciation of the right of taxation; the opposition insisted that the bill was too late to produce beneficial effects, and the minister declared the commissioners should not be qualified to concede the point of independence; the Americans must treat as subjects. The bill respecting taxation was amended by the insertion of a clause to repeal the act for taxing tea; and its provisions were extended to the West India Islands.

25th.

On the third reading of the bills, the members of opposition came prepared for more determined hostility, and finished the task of giving an unfavourable impression, and furnishing arguments for rejecting the proffered conciliation. Mr. Wilkes, who was the chief speaker on this side, qualified the approbation given by opposition to the principles of the act, by observing it could not be withheld, as the minister had borrowed them from those who would not, even when in his hands, refuse to avow them. He bantered some supporters of administration on the period of their conversion to these new principles ; one^c had avowed that he became convinced of the impracticability of deriving a beneficial revenue from America, when General Howe was compelled to retire from the Jerseys ; another^d, when Burgoyne capitulated at Saratoga. Washington and Gates were powerful apostles ; he should not be surprised if General Howe himself were, in the end, *converted*. The era of the minister's conversion was not so far distant ; it happened at the successful moment of the late American negotiation in France, which established their independence. It was impossible not to be charmed with the gentle, meek, supplicating, humiliating tone of the noble Lord. No more was said of the vengeance of the state against daring rebels : the harsh discord of war no longer grated on the ear ; it was now ravished with the enchanting sounds of peace, harmony, and reconciliation. The conciliatory bills were more calculated for England than America : as they tendered a hope, which ministers knew to be fallacious, of reconciliation, on terms short of independence. Mr. Wilkes then analyzed several expressions in the bills, which, far from healing, he considered most obnoxious, offensive and galling ; the language of high and direct insult. In October 1774, he proceeded, the congress humbly supplicated for peace, liberty, and safety ; safety

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had been since secured by their own prowess, except indeed on some parts of their extensive coast : they had been driven into independence, and begun to taste its sweets ; they had been forced into reluctant warfare, and urged to desperation ; their towns wantonly burnt ; men, women, children, even infants at the breast, inhumanly butchered ; captives massacred in cold blood ; the dying and wounded scalped ; and fire and sword carried through the most fertile provinces ; could ministers then weakly expect to cajole America with a parchment act, at the moment of declaring their despair of conquest by the sword ? The colonists had now tried their strength, and found their resources, both on their own continent and in Europe, adequate to their views. The whole world admired their firmness and fortitude, and joined in warm applause of their military achievements. The zeal of France had attained its highest pitch, and even this island might say to America, in the words of Horace,

“ Te cæde gaudentes Britanni

“ Compositis venerantur armis.”

The Americans had expressed the utmost abhorrence of the ministers who were to nominate the commissioners ; and would they entertain a more favourable idea of their creatures ? The intended negotiation could produce only disgrace and humiliation, and create a lucrative job for five bold hungry dependents of the minister. He advised, though not fond of giving advice, an immediate cessation of arms, as the means of saving Howe from the fate of Burgoyne.

To this speech, interspersed with much of that ribaldry in which Mr. Wilkes so much delighted, no answer was given, and the bills passed without a division.

Prepared by the debates in the House of Commons, the Lords in opposition embarrassed the progress of the conciliatory bills with numerous objections, unaccompanied by any concession. The Duke of Rich-

3d 5th, and
9th March.
Debated in
the House of
Lords.

mond read the American declaration of independence, and after commenting on it; paragraph by paragraph, appealed to ministers whether they meant to concede, or subscribe to its assertions? such as these, that the King was a tyrant; that troops had been quartered among them, without their consent; that the admiralty courts were a grievance; that acts suspending those of their respective assemblies, had passed the British Parliament; that the King having acted tyrannically, they had justly withdrawn themselves from his allegiance; and that the judges enjoying their offices during pleasure, were rendered dependent on the Crown? His Majesty had lost the affection of his American subjects, by the insolent, daring, perfidious and unconstitutional language of ministers. These bills, far from regaining it, would sound the trumpet of war to all neighbouring nations. The measure was impotent, ignominious, and ineffectual. Why not renounce at once the right of taxation reserved in the declaratory act? The Americans were wise, sagacious, and penetrating enough to descry, under this pretended candour, concession and good-will, the same principles directed toward the attainment of the same objects, though by a different mode. The bill for sending out commissioners meant nothing, or worse than nothing; it was better calculated to divide than to conciliate. It empowered to treat with America, and then returned to Europe to consult Parliament. Why not, instead of arming commissioners with powers, not to be regulated, nor of course properly exercised, why not repeal all the obnoxious acts at once? Such conduct would evince sincerity. If the necessity which ministers avowed to influence their measures, arose from the knowledge of a treaty, offensive and defensive, having been agitated, or signed between France and America, it was the duty of ministers to afford explicit information. They could not be ignorant of the truth; it had been mentioned in the Lower House

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CHAP. three weeks since; nay report said they not only
 XXXII. knew it, but had sent emissaries to tamper with
 1778. Dr. Franklin and Silas Deane, offering the terms
 included in the bill, but which had been refused
 with contempt. Report even said, they had ap-
 plied to the congress; who had rejected every pro-
 position they now meant to offer. If such was the
 fact, nothing could excuse, nothing palliate the pre-
 sumption and wickedness of such a trick, such a
 deception on the nation, as the present recanting
 scheme, which, if unsuccessful, must augment dif-
 ficulties, and increase dishonour.

Beside these objections from the usual assertors of
 the justice of the American cause, Lord Temple,
 from motives precisely the reverse, expressed high
 indignation and contempt of the measure. America
 had aimed at independence from the beginning.
 Ministers had raised the spirit of the nation by the
 new levies, and now diminished it by thus dis-
 gracefully prostrating the country, parliament, and
 people, at the feet of Franklin and Deane, to whom
 ministers paid homage in sackcloth and ashes. The
 present bills were so disgraceful in every point,
 that "*venit summa dies*" might now be unhappily
 applied to the glory of this country.

Lord Shelburne too, opposed the bills, assigning
 as a motive their tendency to separate the two coun-
 tries. He would never consent that America should
 be independent: his idea of the connexion between
 the mother-country and the colonies was, that they
 should have one friend, one enemy, one purse, and
 one sword; Great Britain superintending the in-
 terests of the whole, as the great controuling power.
 Both countries should have but one will, though
 the means of expressing it might be different, dis-
 tinct, and varied. All this might have been pro-
 cured not long since, and perhaps even now, with-
 out measures of blood. He would never adopt
 any scheme tending to a divorce from the colonies;

when that event should take place, the sun of C H A P. Great Britain was set, she would no longer be XXXII. powerful or respectable.

The bill passed without a division; a protest signed by Lord Abingdon was entered on the journals, containing the principal objections urged in debate, and some new arguments, likely to afford plausible themes of declamation to the American congress.

After passing these acts, two motions were made in the House of Commons, calculated to give an unfavourable impression of their importance, and to urge the ministry to such declarations as would be ungrateful to the Americans. One was by Mr. James Luttrell, “that if the commissioners should find the continuance in office of any minister, or ministers, impressed such jealousies in the colonies as might obstruct the happy work of peace, the commissioners might be enabled to promise their removal.”^e The other was by Mr. Powys, for further instructions to the commissioners. The debate turned on the resources, habits, and luxuries of Great Britain, compared with those of America; and the propriety of conceding independence, if required; but some members of opposition censured the motion, and the chairman was ordered to leave the chair without a division.

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Bills passed.

Motions in
the House of
Commons.

12th Mar.

10th April.

^e This motion, was rejected 150 to 55.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

1778.

Frequent allusions in parliament to hostility on the part of France.
 — *Artful conduct of that power.* — *Visit of the Emperor to Paris.*
 — *Short war on the death of the Elector of Bavaria.* — *Artifices of France* — *detected by the emperor.* — *Attempts to engage Lord Chatham in administration.* — *Message from the King to parliament respecting France.* — *Debates on the addresses.* — *Numerous motions respecting the navy.* — *On contracts.* — *Bill for excluding contractors from the House of Commons.* — *Lost by the management of its supporters.* — *Motion for a tax on places.* — *Propositions for relief of Ireland.* — *Opposition.* — *Numerous petitions.* — *Limited relief afforded.* — *Address of the Roman Catholics to the King.* — *Bill for their relief.* — *Opposed in the House of Lords.* — *Passed.* — *Fox's motion relative to General Burgoyne.* — *The general's return to England.* — *Defence of himself in the House of Commons.* — *The Duke of Richmond's motion for withdrawing the troops from America.* — *Appearance of Lord Chatham.* — *His speech.* — *Reply of the Duke of Richmond.* — *Lord Chatham's sudden illness.* — *Death.* — *Honours paid to his memory by the House of Commons.* — *National munificence.* — *Opposed in the House of Lords.* — *Honours paid to his memory by the common council of London.* — *Lord Chatham's funeral.* — *Adjournment of parliament.* — *Speech from the throne.*

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Frequent
allusions in
parliament
to hostility
on the part
of France.
6th Feb.

IN the late debates, many intimations were given of an approaching rupture with the house of Bourbon : those who consulted public appearances could not fail to recognize the probability of such an event, and look with anxiety for the explanations of ministers. A treaty of commerce, alliance, and friendship, had been some time concluded between the court of Versailles and the American plenipotentiaries ; but, with the utmost efforts, Lord Stormont, the British ambassador, had not yet been able to procure a distinct

communication of its contents or purport. This C H A P. mystery in some measure accounts for, though it does not justify, the contradictory statements delivered by ministers on various occasions in parliament. Mr. Fox, on the introduction of the conciliatory bills, accused the minister (accompanying the accusation with denunciation of punishment) of adjourning the parliament, in order to proffer terms of pacification, but neglecting the business till France had concluded a treaty with the *independent States of America*: he could rely with certainty on the truth of his intelligence; it was no light matter, and derived from no contemptible authority. Mr. Grenville joined with Mr. Fox in demanding an answer on this important subject, averring that he had received correspondent information of offensive language held by the court of France, and the march of a considerable body of forces from their interior provinces. The minister answered with his accustomed candour, that he could not, from authority, affirm the conclusion of such a treaty; it was indeed possible, nay, too probable, but not authenticated by the ambassador.

Many days afterward, the Duke of Grafton recapitulated in the House of Lords the account which Mr. Fox had received, repeated his interrogation, and added, that the intelligence had made so strong an impression on his mind, from the channel through which it came, that if the two secretaries of state, and the whole cabinet council were to declare the contrary, they could not dispel the conviction he felt of its correctness. Lord Weymouth, as a full and fair answer to the enquiry, and challenging the future recollection of the House, said, he was not informed of the signature of any such treaty, or that it was in existence, or even in contemplation.^a

^a In a debate (25th February) Earl Gower intimated the probability of a war with France; but on being pressed for an explanation, declared he knew nothing of a treaty having been signed between the court of France and America, as had been reported, and would venture to say, the rest of the King's ministers were equally unapprized of any such circumstance.

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17th Feb.

5th Mar.

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As these enquiries were intended to prove the inutility of the conciliatory bills, which the minister properly considered as the only means of divorcing America from an unnatural connection with France, answers less explicit would have been justifiable ; but the inconsistency displayed in these contradictory statements, was prejudicial to the character of administration.

Artful conduct of that power.

In preparation for a rupture, France artfully maintained such an influence in the continental cabinets, as would secure her against hostilities, while her force was employed to the injury of Great Britain ; and at the same time reserved the means, on a future occasion, of converting the prejudices of the principal powers to her own advantage. For this purpose, the alliance and friendship of the King of Prussia were assiduously courted, as the principal engine to be employed in raising enemies against Great Britain. Spain was secured by the family compact ; Holland was infected by intrigue ; and in the cabinet of Russia, French influence, aided by that of Prussia, was acquiring a dangerous preponderance. Interest, policy, and principle, combined to render the Emperor friendly to England ; but means were found to render him an indifferent spectator of the hostile efforts of a power for which he entertained sentiments of dislike and contempt, which even his family alliance could not overcome.

Visit of the Emperor to Paris.

In 1777 the Emperor visited Paris, under the title of Count Falkenstein : the French court viewed their illustrious guest with jealousy, and constrained admiration : the dread of Austrian greatness under such a monarch, destroyed that factitious friendship which both parties had been endeavouring to foster and bring to maturity, during upward of twenty years. All the arts of dissimulation were employed by France to conceal the change ; but the Emperor returned to Vienna, impressed with a conviction that the house of Bourbon was not his natural friend, and that the

cabinet of Versailles was jealous of his talents, and averse to their attaining full scope on the demise of the Empress. This was not the only advantage which the Emperor reaped from seeing the theatre of France behind the scenes; he learnt to distinguish its real strength from its artificial machinery and outward decoration. He returned with a just idea of the fallacy of Bourbon friendship, and an indifferent opinion of the genius of the French nation, and of their power to preponderate in the scale of Europe, either as friend or foe.

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On the death of the Elector of Bavaria, at the close of the year, the inherent opposition of interests between the houses of Austria and Bourbon was displayed through all the flimsy disguise under which art, address, and female connections, had long endeavoured to conceal it. The imperial cabinet thought the moment favourable, and their right well founded, to extend their possessions on the Danube and towards the Rhine. France, on the other hand, could not remain insensible of the danger to her which might arise from such an acquisition. From that instant, the secret support of Prussia in a new war became the object of her wishes, and the source of a thousand insidious intrigues in the empire; yet with an effrontery, the extent of which is hardly credible, France pretended still to show herself the friend of Austria, and continued to wear that mask during the short war which ensued between that power and Prussia, as well as throughout the whole negotiation at Teschen, by which it was terminated. At the conclusion of peace, she flattered herself with having reconciled three of the most difficult, and, to all appearance, incompatible points of state artifice; serving the views and interests of Prussia; keeping up at the same time the friendship and confidence of Austria; whilst she likewise succeeded to a considerable degree in loosening the ties of friendship which had so long subsisted between the Czarina and Great Britain. The Emperor,

Short war
on the death
of the
Elector of
Bavaria.

Artifices of
France.

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Detected by
the Empe-
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engage Lord
Chatham in
administra-
tion.

2d Feb.

11th Feb.

however, soon discovered and traced with indignation every step of this base duplicity, and appeared to entertain a desire of renewing the connection between Austria and England, if it could be done without risking a war, in which he must make great sacrifices without the hope of obtaining any effectual assistance, and from which he was equally restrained by financial and domestic considerations.

In such a crisis, it was natural and politic in the British Government to attempt engaging the assistance of the great war minister, respected for his talents and his success in a former emergency, venerable for his years, idolized by the public, and dreaded by his opponents. Overtures were undoubtedly made to Lord Chatham to form a new cabinet; but how far they were authorised, what concessions were to be made, what measures pursued, or what individuals to share the powers of government, are circumstances, which, if they were arranged, are at present unknown. The total overthrow of the existing administration was a part of the plan; but the treaty terminated abruptly, and in a manner which has not been sufficiently elucidated.^c The friends of Lord Chatham, after the time when the negotiation ceased, were sanguine in their expectations of its success. Lord Lyttleton, in the committee on the state of the nation, said there remained one man who greatly and wisely disapproved of consenting to render America independent; and if the continuance of war should finally be decided on, or new hostilities should be commenced in our own defence, he was still equal to conduct them with success. Mr. Grenville spoke in the House of Commons in terms still more decisive: "I think," he said, "notwithstanding all past occurrences, that the colonies may, by proper measures, be

^b From private information and correspondence.

^c See authentic account of the part taken by the Earl of Chatham in a transaction which passed in the beginning of the year 1778. Annual Register, 1778, p. 244. et seq., and in various other publications.

yet brought back to a state of constitutional obedience, and we may once more recover their affections. If there be a man who has served this nation with honour to himself, and glory to his country ; if there be a man who has carried the arms of Britain triumphant to every quarter of the globe, and that beyond the most sanguine expectations of the people ; if there be a man of whom the house of Bourbon stands more particularly in awe ; if there be a man in this country, who unites the confidence of England and America, is not he the proper person to treat with America, and not those who have uniformly deceived and oppressed them ? There is not one present who is ignorant of the person to whom I allude. You all know that I mean a noble and near relation, Lord Chatham. He is the man whom His Majesty ought to call to his councils, because the Americans revere him, and the unbiassed part of the nation would most cheerfully trust their dearest interests with him ; if it should be found that to him the nation looks forward for its salvation, it is a duty which His Majesty owes to his people to avail himself of such respectable assistance.” Lord North answered these observations with his accustomed sincerity. Past events did not enable him to ascertain the favourable disposition of America toward individuals or parties in either House ; he believed all men and all parties equally obnoxious to them ; and whenever propositions should be made, the colonies would not consider who made them, but whether the terms were adequate to their expectations. He would cheerfully resign the disagreeable task to any person who was thought better qualified, and content to accept it.

The conciliatory bills had scarcely received the royal assent, when Lord North gave notice that he should present a message from the King ; Mr. Grenville, in common with the whole House, anticipating the subject, moved for copies of all communications with the ambassador at the court of France. The

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16th March.
Lord North
gives notice
of an in-
tended mes-
sage from
the King.

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The mes-
sage.

motion was over-ruled^d, after a short debate, in which the minister said he never denied the signature of the treat; it was now published by the French: if their interest consisted in promulgating, his duty required concealment of its contents.

The royal message stated the receipt of notice, by order of the French King, that he had concluded a treaty of amity and commerce with certain persons employed by His Majesty's revolted subjects in North America, in consequence of which offensive communication the British ambassador was instructed to withdraw from Paris, and the King relied on the zealous and affectionate spirit of his people to repel insult, and maintain the national reputation. The note of the French ambassador laid before the House was conceived in terms of irony and derision.^e

“The United States of America,” it said, “*who are in full possession of independence*, as pronounced by them on the fourth of July 1776, having proposed to the King, to consolidate by a formal convention, the connection begun to be established between the two nations, the respective plenipotentiaries have signed a treaty of friendship and commerce. The French King being determined to cultivate the good understanding subsisting between France and Great Britain, *by every means compatible with his dignity*, and the good of his subjects, makes this proceeding known to the court of London, and declares that the contracting parties have paid great attention *not to stipulate any exclusive advantages in favour of the French nation*; and that the United States have reserved the liberty of treating *with every nation whatever*, upon the same footing of equality and reciprocity. In making this communication to the court of London, the King is firmly persuaded she will find new proofs of His Majesty's *constant and*

^d 231 to 146.

^e The expression of Washington, who adds, “more degrading to the pride and dignity of Britain than any thing she has ever experienced since she has been a nation. ‘It is not an actual declaration of war,’ but certainly must produce one.” Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 278.

*sincere disposition for peace ; and that His Britannic Majesty, animated by the same sentiments, will equally avoid everything that may alter their good harmony ; and would particularly take effectual measures to prevent the commerce between His Majesty's subjects and the United States of North America from being interrupted, and to cause all the usages received between commercial nations to be, in this respect, observed, and all those rules which can be said to subsist between the two crowns of France and Great Britain. In this just confidence, the under signed ambassador thinks it superfluous to acquaint the British minister, that the King his master, *being determined to protect effectually the lawful commerce of his subjects, and maintain the dignity of his flag, has taken eventual measures in concert with the United States of North America.*"*

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1778.

Motion for
an address.

In discussing the motion for an address, an amendment was proposed, requesting His Majesty to dismiss the ministry ; but no sentiment was uttered derogatory to the representatives of a nation thus, in the person of the sovereign, wantonly and audaciously insulted. Lord North was, however, reproached for a culpable neglect of the means of information and defence ; he had suffered himself to be surprised at the notification of a treaty which appeared to have been two years under discussion ; and on the eve of a war, the kingdom was destitute of adequate provision for internal safety.

Governor Pownall, without intending to vindicate the minister, explained the circumstances of the treaty, the very idea of which had not existed six months, and the actual negotiation not three months. In August the American commissioners began to press the ministers of France for an explicit declaration, and effectual assistance, which was evaded by the crafty cabinet of Versailles, where the insidious policy of an ostensible neutrality, and indirect aid, was preferred. At a period when distresses and apprehensions bore hard on the Americans, the French, profiting of their

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distress, took occasion to attempt extorting from them an inequitable compact. When the account of General Burgoyne's successes, and the capture of Ticonderoga arrived, the Americans had lost all hopes, the negotiation with France was suspended, and mutual reproaches had almost occasioned a breach between the French ministry and the American commissioners. In their despair, the commissioners attempted, through the channel of Governor Pownall, to commence a treaty with the mother-country for reconciliation, and re-establishment of peace; and even declared that although an acknowledgment of independency was a *sine qua non*, yet on that and all other points, they would use all endeavours to save the honour of their parent country. Of this intimation he had caused the government to be apprized, but received for answer that the basis of the treaty was inadmissible.

Despairing of reconciliation, the commissioners, in September or October, renewed their negotiation with France, and settled a few preliminaries, *ad referendum*, which were transmitted to America for the approbation of congress. But when the news of General Burgoyne's disaster arrived, and when the French ministry understood Lord North's intention to bring forward a conciliatory plan, they advanced without hesitation towards the American commissioners, and executed a treaty on their own terms.

At the close of this interesting narrative, Governor Pownall proceeded to observe, that peace with America was yet probable, if Great Britain would pursue the proper course. "The Americans are and must be independent. We acknowledge it in our own acts; and have indeed, however we may cover our shame with words, resigned all dominion over them. They will never rescind the system contained in their four grand acts; the declaration of rights; the manifesto to all nations; the declaration of independency; and the act of confederation; but if parliament will extend the powers of the commissioners, so far as to

acknowledge their independence on conditions, C H A P.
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they will, in return, form a federal treaty, offensive,
defensive, and commercial with us."

The compact signed at Paris was not yet ratified by congress, and by a speedy and candid exertion, this country might be enabled to take advantage of the natural predilection prevailing in America, and either frustrate the French treaty, or by entering into one on equal terms, succeed in depriving the French of all the benefits of their dexterity, since the Americans would more willingly keep their commerce in its accustomed channel, than engage with strangers, with whose language they were unacquainted. If a federal treaty were not adopted, and the Americans should ever be induced to treat on other terms, one of their first demands must be a reimbursement of expenses, and an indemnification for losses. A pecuniary remuneration was impossible; but, instead of that mode, government must sacrifice Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Newfoundland fishery; this *he knew would be insisted on*; but if independence were conceded, America could only treat on the same ground as any other independent nation, and indemnities were by them never required. He exposed the fallacy of arguments tending to show our force insufficient for resistance to the new enemy, and concluded by declining to interfere with the amendment: he was indifferent who were or should be ministers; but coincided in every feeling of resentment expressed by the address.

General Conway supported the principles so ably advanced by Governor Pownall, and corroborated his statements by observing, he had seen a letter from Dr. Franklin, written since the signature of the French treaty, offering peace, if Great Britain would forego the claim to supremacy: and Mr. Dundas said, he should rather wish to form a federal union than lose America, or let her fall into the hands of France.

Lord Chatham was several times mentioned in the

C H A P. debate, as a minister who could unite the confidence
 XXXIII. of all parties, terrify the House of Bourbon, and conciliate America ; but Lord North, after repeating his
 1778. disregard of his employments, observed, that as the interest of the empire, no less than his own pride, required his continuance in office, he was determined not to quit the helm, until the vessel was safe in port.

The original address was carried.^f

Address in
the House
of Lords.

An amendment was proposed in the upper, similar to that in the lower House; no opposition was offered by the lords in administration, except one single remark, that it was unprecedented to clog an address with a condition, implying that a measure, right in itself, ought not to be pursued, unless something else were granted. The debate was chiefly maintained by two distinct parties in opposition, of whom some were desirous to preserve peace with France at all events, and concede the independence of America, while others felt the indignity offered to Great Britain, as a justification of instant hostility ; and represented the loss of America as the termination of British prosperity : the amendment was negatived^g, and the address carried.^h Addresses were also returned to a message for calling out the militia, without division or debate.

23d Mar.

Debate on
the navy.

11th and
16th Feb.

11th Mar.
Fox's motion
in the
committee
on the state
of the
nation.

The navy engaged a considerable portion of parliamentary attention. Before the receipt of the message respecting France, the condition of this bulwark of the British empire had been severely scrutinized in the committee of supply. An account of the ships in Great Britain and Ireland being submitted to the committee on the state of the nation, Mr. Fox founded on it a motion, that the navy was inadequate to the defence of the country. Mr. Temple Luttrell followed the mover, and concluded a long speech, fully displaying the bad condition of the ships, the neglect of supplies, and the general deplorable state of the service in every department, by declaring that nothing could be clearer

than the inadequacy of the naval power to the present crisis of public affairs, excepting the prostitution, mismanagement, and atrocious criminality of those ministers whom our deluded sovereign had fatally chosen to entrust with this best protection of the realm. No detailed answer was given to his statements, or arguments as the King's message respecting France was then in preparation ; but Admiral Keppel took occasion to say, that if he had the honour to be employed in the service of his country, he rather wished to have a small fleet well fitted and completely manned, than a large number of ships badly equipped. The previous question was negatived without a division.

In the House of Lords, the Duke of Bolton moved for the personal examination of the surveyor of the navy. Lord Sandwich, declaring he did not wish to evade the closest investigation, resisted the proposition, as tending to injure the country by making improper disclosures ; the papers already submitted to the House afforded undue information. The motion was negativedⁱ ; but Lord Radnor observed, that in rejecting it for the reasons assigned, the House treated the first Lord of the Admiralty with more respect than their ancestors had treated the husband of the Queen of England.

The Earl of Effingham, accusing Lord Sandwich of gross mismanagement, and representing the marine in the most disgraceful view, moved a series of propositions, for disclosing the state of the navy during the last eight years, the ordinary estimates, and ships broke up, built and repaired. The professed object of these motions was the enforcement of economy, which, he said, was grossly violated in every branch of the service : there was a constant repugnancy between the estimates and the actual expenditure, which was a gross insult to parliament, and a shameful fallacy. Lord Sandwich made a specific defence

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1778.

25th Feb.
The Duke of
Bolton's mo-
tion.

31st Mar.
Lord Effing-
ham's mo-
tion.

CHAP. on each head, and, comparing the present state of the
 XXXIII. navy with its condition in 1727, formed deductions
 1778. highly favourable to his own administration; the
 British force then consisted of a hundred and ninety
 ships of war, it was now three hundred and seventy-
 three; and expenses of every kind were doubled. In
 the course of debate, many collateral topics were
 agitated; the management of Greenwich hospital, the
 improvidence in forming contracts, and the pecula-
 tions in the dock-yards; and the first Lord of
 Admiralty was threatened with popular vengeance.
 The people would rise, and, as the Dutch had
 treated the De Witts, tear him limb from limb.
 The debate then became exceedingly tumultuous,
 and the motions were all negatived.

12th Mar.
 Debate in
 the House of
 Lords on con-
 tracts.

Previously to this discussion, the attention of the
 House had been engaged on the subject of contracts: the
 Earl of Effingham, in the committee on the state
 of the nation, pointed out what he considered a most
 scandalous want of economy in the transport service,
 by which an expense had been created of six hun-
 dred thousand pounds: witnesses were examined,
 and several resolutions tendered, which were dis-
 posed of by voting the chairman to leave the
 chair.

30th.
 In the House
 of Commons.

Colonel Barré also moved for a select committee
 to inspect the public accounts; charging the minister
 with gross negligence and ignorance in making con-
 tracts, and the House with shameful and traitorous
 servility in sanctioning his evasions and delusions.
 He analysed, with scrupulous severity, the conduct
 of agents and contractors; the mode of dividing
 profits; and censured, in unqualified terms, the con-
 tracts and agencies of Messrs. Harley and Drum-
 mond, on the Spanish, Portuguese, and British
 gold coin; and of Mr. Atkinson, relative to his rum,
 and the hire of transports. But it was not wonder-
 ful, he said, that great sums had been devoured by
 contracts, when the minister was so criminally
 ignorant as not to know currency from sterling.

Lord North having explained himself with some warmth on the imputed ignorance and misconduct, and consented to the appointment of a committee; a report was presented to the House, but at too late a period to be taken into consideration.

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1778.

18th May.

Sir Philip Jennings Clerke took advantage of these discussions to catch at popularity, by introducing a bill for the exclusion of contractors from parliament, unless their contracts were obtained by a public bidding. The debate on the preparatory motion was, as might be expected, a series of declamations, or of artful suggestions, designed to entrap the minister. The motion was said not to be hostile to the persons or characters of contractors, but framed to prevent the foul deeds imputed to ministers, and men supposed in league to rob the public. The minister, if he considered properly his own interest, reputation, and personal satisfaction, ought to support the motion; and contractors would be relieved from all the obloquy to which they were exposed. It was not designed to exclude them for being contractors in a fair, open, equitable manner; but for being closet contractors, private plunderers; confederates with a corrupt administration; robbing their country, and either sharing the spoil with the rest of the public conspirators, or with some others, more remote from the general observation.

13th April.
Bill for ex-
cluding con-
tractors from
parliament.

Many reflections were made on the persons, characters, and gains of contractors; and Lord George Gordon, an intemperate fanatic, called the minister, the greatest of all contractors; a contractor for men; a contractor for parliamentary flocks; a contractor for the representatives of the people. He sincerely wished him to save his country, and his own life; to call off his butchers and ravagers from the colonies; to retire with the rest of His Majesty's evil advisers, from the public government, and make way for honest and wiser counsellors: "to turn from his wickedness and live." It was not yet too late to repent; the public clamour for revenge was not yet raised against him; His Ma-

CHAP. jesty's troops were not yet totally defeated in
 XXXIII. America.

1778. Such a measure, supported by such arguments, met with the deserved fate. Many who were obliged to court popularity on any terms, lent their sanction, though convinced of its futility, and, at the first convenient opportunity, abandoned the cause they reluctantly sustained. On the second reading, a motion for the Speaker to leave the chair being negatived by a majority of two only, a new proposal was brought forward to adjourn the commitment for two months, when six supporters of the bill quitting the House, the question was carried, and the bill lost.^k

4th May.

9th Mar. Another attempt to acquire popularity was made
 Motion for a by Mr. Gilbert, who moved in a committee of supply,
 tax on places. to impose, during the continuance of the war, a tax of one-fourth part of the net annual income, on all salaries, fees, and perquisites of office, exceeding two hundred pounds per annum, and all annuities, pensions, stipends, or other yearly gratuities, issuing out of the exchequer, or any branch of His Majesty's revenues. This proposition was carried in the committee^l, but rejected on bringing up the report.^m

2d April.

Propositions
 for relief of
 Ireland.

7th.

A committee of the House of Commons was formed to revise the Irish trade laws. The proposition originated with Lord Nugent, but was strenuously supported by the opposition members, particularly Mr. Burke, and carried without dissent. In the committee, Lord Nugent, observed, that from a series of unshaken loyalty, his countrymen, the Irish, were entitled to every encouragement which good and faithful subjects could deserve and a wise and grateful government bestow; oppressive laws had hitherto been their only reward: he did not, however, mean to offer complaints; if he did, his generous countrymen would disavow them; they saw Great Britain in

^k The division on the first motion was 115 to 113; on the second 113 to 109.
 1 100 to 82.

^m 147 to 141.

distress; their resentment was hushed; and forgetful of their wrongs, they made an unsolicited tender of their lives and fortunes. From a view of all the laws which bore hard on Ireland, he had drawn up a few resolutions, which he hoped the committee would adopt. He anticipated some opposition from the West India planters, but trusted the House would not be influenced by arguments founded on selfishness. He moved that the people of Ireland might be permitted to send on board British vessels, navigated according to law, to the coast of Africa, and other foreign settlements, all Irish manufactures, wool and woollen cloths excepted. The motion was slightly objected to, but carried without a division.

Resolutions were afterwards adopted for importing into Ireland, from the coast of Africa, all goods except indigo and tobacco; for permitting the direct exportation from Ireland to all places, except Great Britain, of glass manufactured in that kingdom; permitting, by the abolition of a duty amounting to a prohibition, the importation of cotton-yarn, the manufacture of Ireland, into Great Britain; and allowing the importation of Irish sail-cloth and cordage.

During the Easter recess a formidable opposition was formed among the trading cities and towns against the bills founded on these resolutions. The first which engaged the attention of the House was from the manufacturers of Somersetshire, against the bill for permitting the importation of sail-cloth from Ireland. Mr. Burke, who through mistake moved for leave to bring in the bill, observed he had since discovered, that such a law was already in being. If the bill, he observed, was to be productive of the consequences stated in the petition, it was extraordinary the petitioners forgot to complain when they were hurt, and felt so strongly when there was not even a possibility of sustaining injury. From this he inferred, that the jealousy entertained of the other bills was

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1778.
4th May.
Numerous
petitions.
6th.

equally ill-founded, and only originated in gross prejudice, or the selfish views of individuals. Petitions in unusual numbers also flowed in from all parts of the kingdom, and from many different classes of manufacturers.ⁿ

Sir Cecil Wray, declaring it the duty of every independent man to resist the bills, because sanctioned by Lord North, endeavoured to procure the rejection of that founded on the first resolution; but was successfully opposed by Mr. Burke, who ably distinguished himself throughout the proceedings. The bills before the House, he said, restored only what the wisdom of the British parliament had, on a former occasion, granted to Ireland. In the twelfth of Charles II. the British navigation act passed, extending equally to Ireland. A kind of left-handed policy had, however, deprived her of the freedom enjoyed by that act, and she had ever since remained under the most cruel, oppressive, and unnatural restrictions. Deprived of every incentive to industry, and excluded from every passage to wealth, she had inwardly lamented, but never complained of, her condition. He did not mean, by describing her situation, to engage the humanity of the House. The people of Ireland would not accept of favours; they called for justice, not pity; they requested Britain to be wise, not generous; to provide for her own good, and secure her own interest, sensible that wisdom and prudence would dictate, that to accomplish these a contrary conduct toward them was necessary. The annual revenue of the two kingdoms had been exultingly, but most inequitable, drawn into comparison, to prove that Ireland paid no proportion of tax. The number of inhabitants did not constitute the specific difference in the article of taxation, but the distinction of internal opulence, and external advantage. Ac-

ⁿ These petitions were so numerous, that a mere abstract of them occupies 14 octavo pages, closely printed, on a very small type.

cording to that rule of comparison, Ireland was taxed in a quadruple proportion more than England. The internal wealth, and external advantage of trade and commerce, were forty times greater in England than in Ireland, who was taxed, although deprived of the means of payment by restrictions on trade. “Enlarge her ability to pay,” he said, “and in proportion, augment her taxes. The low rate of labour is a nugatory argument, for till the price of labour is equal, the superiority of manufacture will remain with England. The price of labour rises with the growth of manufacture; is highest when the manufacture is best; and where the price of labour is most advanced, the manufacturer is able to sell his commodity at the lowest price.” He resisted the effect of the petitions, considering them the mere offspring of conjecture. Ireland could not vie with England in manufactures; an act permitting the free exportation of manufactured iron had not been prosecuted; the only article imported under it into England was a quantity of corkscrews, which though evidences of luxury, afforded but a feeble proof of excellence of manufacture. The bill for free importation of woollen-yarn into England, had been opposed by petitions from every part of the country; yet experience compelled an acknowledgment of its beneficial tendency. It was absurd to think a participation of manufacture would be detrimental; the woollen manufacture had been planted in different parts of the kingdom; and competition had not depressed, but promoted the trade. He lamented, that in one instance, his conscience impelled him to oppose the wishes, though not the interests, of his constituents at Bristol; if from his conduct, he should forfeit their suffrages at an ensuing election, it would stand on record, an example to future representatives of the commons of England, that one man at least had dared to resist the desires of his constituents, when his judgment assured him they were wrong.

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1778.
11th May.
Small relief
afforded.

The House divided in favour of the bills^o; the petitioners were afterward heard by counsel, and notwithstanding the general disposition of parliament, and the concurrence of both sides, in not considering it as a party question, the clamour of the interested bore down the sense of the legislature; a sort of compromise was effected; most of the advantages intended for Ireland were abandoned; some enlargement was afforded to the linen trade, and some openings allowed in the West India and African commerce; but the whole transaction was considered rather as an earnest of future concession, than as a measure of present satisfaction.

1st May.
Address of
the Roman
Catholics.

During the session, a dutiful and modest address was presented to the King, signed by nine Roman Catholic peers; Lord Surry, heir to the Duke of Norfolk, and a hundred and sixty-three other commoners, assuring him of their respectful attachment to his person and the civil constitution of the country, which having been perpetuated through all changes of religious opinions and establishments, was at length perfected by that revolution which placed His Majesty's illustrious House on the throne, and inseparably united his title to the crown, with the laws and liberties of the people. Their exclusion from the benefits of that constitution did not diminish their reverence for it; they submitted with patience to such restrictions and discouragements as the legislature thought expedient; they thankfully received such relaxations of rigour as the mildness of an enlightened age and the benignity of His Majesty's government had gradually produced; and submissively waited, without presuming to suggest either time or measure, for such further indulgence as those happy causes must, in their own season, effect. Their dissent from the establishment was purely conscientious; they held no opinions adverse to government, or repugnant to

the duties of good citizens. For confirmation of this assertion, they referred to their irreproachable conduct during many years, and still professed an unalterable attachment to the cause and welfare of the country, and an utter detestation of the designs and views of any foreign power, against the dignity of the crown, the safety and tranquillity of the subject. The delicacy of their situation precluded them from indicating any particular mode in which they might testify their zeal; but they would ever be ready to give such proofs of fidelity, and purity of intention, as His Majesty's wisdom, and the sense of the nation, should deem expedient.

This sensible address probably conciliated administration toward a motion made by Sir George Savile, to repeal certain penalties and disabilities created by an act of William III.^p for preventing the further growth of popery. He adverted to the peaceable and loyal behaviour of that sect under a government which, though not severein enforcing, yet suffered such intolerable penalties and disqualifications, to remain on the statutes. He drew favourable inferences from their late loyal address, and proposed a test, by which they should bind themselves to support the civil government by law established. The motion, seconded by Mr. Dunning, and supported by Mr. Thurlow and Lord Beauchamp, was unanimously voted.

The bill passed rapidly through the Commons, and was but slightly opposed in the Upper House. Doctor Hinchliff, Bishop of Peterborough, avowed becoming sentiments of liberality, but could not conceal from his own mind the genius of popery, so as to consider its religious principles altogether distinct from that political superstructure which had been raised on them; and to the support of which, should occasion offer, they might be still made too subservient. The laws for protection of the church and state should not be altered without due deliberation; according

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24th May.
Bill for their
rel.eſ.

Opposed in
the House
of Lords.
25th.

CHAP. to the existing regulations, a younger son might, by
 XXXIII. professing himself a Protestant, deprive his elder
 brother of the estate: but should this bill pass, an
 estate might be so limited, as to descend only to a
 Catholic; and a Protestant elder brother be incap-
 acitated by the limitation. Provision was made by
 the act of William, for the maintenance and edu-
 cation of a Protestant child, during his father's life-
 time, at the discretion of the Lord Chancellor; but
 though the present act did not alter that regulation,
 no care was taken of such child; after the death of
 his father, he might then be left destitute because he
 was not a Roman Catholic.

1778.

The Marquis of Rockingham contended that the bill gave to the Catholics no greater advantages than were possessed by all other descriptions of men, and reprobated the illiberal policy of maintaining laws which subjected them to injuries and oppressions. Lord Shelburne said, when the penal clauses were proposed in parliament, nobody approved, although no one had the spirit to oppose them, and in proof that they were not so obsolete as was supposed, cited the case of Molony; he was apprehended and brought to trial by the lowest and most despicable of mankind, a common informing constable of the city of London, convicted of being a popish priest, and the court was reluctantly obliged (shocking as the idea was) to condemn him to perpetual imprisonment. The privy-council used every effort to give a legal discharge to the prisoner, but the laws would not allow it, nor dared the King himself grant a pardon. Lord Shelburne, however, with his colleagues in office, were so perfectly persuaded of the impolicy and inhumanity of the law, that they ventured to restore him to liberty. The bill passed without further impediment.

Passed.

19th Mar.
Fox's mo-
tion relative
to General
Burgoyne.

In the committee on the state of the nation, Mr. Fox, guided by the papers which had been communi-
cated to the House, moved two propositions for cen-
suring Lord George Germaine, on the subject of Gene-

ral Burgoyne's disaster. He expected to be answered that the plan of the expedition was the general's, but the papers proved the contrary; his plan was departed from, and altered invariably for the worse. The only motive for leaving Canada was to force his way to Albany, and join Sir William Howe, but orders were given to one party only. The first proposition was rejected on a division^p, and Mr. Fox, indignantly tearing the other paper, declared he would make no more motions. On the suggestion of Mr. Wedderburne, it was voted that the failure of the expedition from Canada was not caused by any neglect in the Secretary of State; but the resolution was not reported to the House.

General Burgoyne, by favour of congress, was permitted to return to England on his parole: a court of enquiry, composed of general officers, pronounced their authority incompetent to an adjudication of his case, while a prisoner on parole under the convention. He demanded an audience of the King, but was refused, on the ground of an established etiquette, which forbids the appearance at court of persons under his circumstances.^q He enjoyed, however, before the termination of the session, a partial opportunity of vindicating his conduct, in consequence of a motion by Mr. Vyner, seconded by Mr. Wilkes, and amended by Mr. Fox for a committee to consider the transactions of the northern army, the convention at Saratoga, and the means by which the general obtained his release. General Burgoyne declared his intention to have moved for papers of great importance, but, for the present, contented himself with supporting the amendment. He justified his mode of employing the Indians, though heavowed that he thought their services overvalued, sometimes insignificant, often barbarous, always capricious, and the employment of them only

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Burgoyne's
return to
England.

26th May.
His defence
in the House
of Commons.

^p 164 to 44.

^q Letter from General Burgoyne to his constituents.

CHAP. justifiable, when, by being united to a regular army,
XXXIII. they could be kept under controul, and made subser-
vient to a general system. He wished on this head to
avail himself of the evidence of M. St. Luc de Corne,
1778. who had commanded, and was well acquainted with
the manners of the Indians; he denied all the ravages
imputed to his army, asserting that not more than
one accident by fire happened during their progress.
After describing, as accurately as he could, the con-
dition of the surrendered force, the general adverted
to his own situation: an enquiry, he said, had been
commenced in his absence; papers submitted to the
House, imperfect in some respects, redundant in
others, particularly in the disclosure of a confidential
letter, the offspring of a warm and unsuspicious heart,
which he had written to the Secretary of State, and
of which advantage had been taken to insinuate that
he solicited employ. He defended his progress in
the campaign, refuting several calumnious fabrica-
tions; such as, that Generals Philips and Frazer were
averse to the passage of Hudson's river, and that his
army was encumbered with an enormous and un-
necessary mass of artillery and baggage. The two
generals were the eyes and hands with which he
conducted all military operations; able advisers,
faithful friends, they felt for his difficulties, but
never uttered a syllable implying preference of an
alternative. His communications with General Fra-
zer were those of unrestrained friendship; affection
and good wishes to his commanding officer com-
posed the last sentence he uttered. No more ar-
tillery accompanied the army than the field train
destined for the expedition, when Sir Guy Carleton
expected to conduct it, and all baggage of bulk, to
the abridgement of many material comforts, were
cheerfully left behind by the officers; some of them
had not beds; many lay in soldiers tents; and none
had more than the common necessaries for active
service. He complained bitterly of his reception

on his return ; and averting all blame from his army, avowed himself the only criminal, if there was really any crime, and solicited an enquiry, “ putting all the interests that hang most emphatically by the heart-strings of man, his fortune, his honour, his head, almost his salvation, on the test.”

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The answer to these remarks by Lord George Germaine was short : an explanation was required on three particulars, which he would afford ; as to the confidential letter, it was accidentally put among the official papers, and by that means sent by the clerks with the others, for which he expressed his concern. Mons. St. Luc had introduced himself to the Secretary of State as a man who had performed great services at the head of the savages ; and in conversation asserted, that General Burgoyne was a fine officer with regulars, but did not seem to like the savages, nor did he take the proper steps to retain their good will : he was *un brave homme, mais lourd comme un Allemand.* The refusal of access to the sovereign, till his conduct had undergone a military enquiry, was justified by precedent. His Lordship concluded, that as military men were the most proper judges, he did not see the propriety of parliamentary interference.

The amendment, and the original motion, were both rejected on a division.^r The subject was entered into more at length, fresh papers communicated, and evidence examined in the next session.

In the course of this debate, Mr. Temple Luttrell made insulting allusions to the court martial on Lord George Germaine, and his subsequent disgrace by George II. Why should he be partially acquitted to the prejudice of a gallant officer, whose only crime had avowedly been that he was too zealous, too brave, too enterprizing, too anxious for the good of his country, had strictly obeyed his orders, and performed all that British valour could effect in executing the minister’s plan. Had he, on the contrary, re-

Altercation
between Mr.
Luttrell and
Lord George
Germaine.

^r 144 to 95.

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ceded from his colours, disobeyed the commands of his superiors, and hid himself from danger, such conduct would have given him pretensions to the patronage of the First Lord of the Treasury, and the honours and emoluments of the American secretary.

Lord George Germaine replied he never was personal in the House, nor ever by his conduct merited such an attack ; he despised the honourable member, but would level himself with his wretched character and malice ; old as he was, he would meet that fighting gentleman, and be revenged. The House called to order : the Speaker reprimanded both members, and insisted on their promise that the affair should be no further prosecuted ; Lord George Germaine apologized for his warmth, and Mr. Luttrell, after attempting to escape from the House, and standing in contumacy till he had nearly been taken into custody of the serjeant at arms, acknowledged his error, and said he meant his reflections as public matter, not as private abuse or enmity.

7th April.
The Duke of Richmond's motion for withdrawing the troops from America.

The committee on the state of the nation, closed in the House of Lords with a motion by the Duke of Richmond for an address, recapitulating the expenses, misconduct, and losses of the war, and beseeching the King to withdraw his forces from America, and dismiss the ministry. Lord Weymouth opposed it, observing, that all the circumstances stated as facts had been already rejected by the committee. Our situation with respect to France should prevent the House from adopting a proposition which indicated the country to be in a defenceless state ; and to request the King to withdraw his armies was an improper interference with his just prerogative. The same prerogative extended to the appointment or removal of ministers ; if guilty of misconduct they were open to public enquiry : and if convicted on competent proof, objects of parliamentary complaint, and of parliamentary prayer for removal. It had been asked, did ministers consider their places as their freeholds ? Did they

hold them as a matter of right? Did they deem their C H A P.
XXXIII.
1778. dismission from employment a punishment? certainly not. The King, who honoured them with his commands, could, whenever he pleased, dispense with their services; and when His Majesty thought that proper, no member of administration would consider himself punished.

On this day, the Earl of Chatham, struggling for a momentary victory over disease, made his appearance in the House of Lords. The importance of the crisis, the character of the great statesman, and the expectation of important counsel, rendered his presence peculiarly interesting; while the langour of illness, softening, although it could not extinguish the fire of his eye, and diminishing the elation, although it could not abate the dignity of his mien, gave force to every feeling of personal affection, and suppressed every sentiment of petulant or acrimonious opposition, which a long course of parliamentary contest had excited. When in the garb of sickness, he was led into the House between his son and son-in-law, the peers of all parties paid a voluntary tribute of respect by standing while he passed to his proper place.

He rose from his seat slowly and difficultly; leaning on his crutch, and supported under each arm by his relatives. Taking one hand from his crutch, he raised it, and, casting his eyes toward Heaven, said, "I thank God that I have been enabled to come here this day to perform my duty, and to speak on a subject which has so deeply impressed my mind. — I am old and infirm — have one foot, more than one foot, in the grave. — I am risen from my bed to stand up in the cause of my country — perhaps never again to speak in this House."* He came to express his

Appearance
of Lord
Chatham.

His speech.

* From *Anecdotes of distinguished Persons* by Mr. Seward, vol. ii. p. 422. 4th edit. 1800. This well-informed author adds the following circumstances: "The purport of his speech is well known. The reverence — the attention — the stillness of the House was most affecting: if any one had dropped a handkerchief, the noise would have been heard. At first he spoke in a very low and feeble tone; but as he grew warm, his voice rose, and was as harmonious as ever; oratorical and affecting, per-

CHAP. indignation at an idea, he understood was gone
 XXXIII. forth, of yielding up the sovereignty of America !
 1778. "I rejoice," he continued, "that the grave has not
 closed on me : that I am still alive to lift up my
 voice against the dismemberment of this ancient
 and most noble monarchy ! Pressed down, as I am,
 by the hand of infirmity, I am little able to assist
 my country in this perilous conjuncture ; but, while
 I have sense and memory, I will never consent to
 deprive the royal offspring of the House of Bruns-
 wick, the heirs of the Princess Sophia, of their fairest
 inheritance. Where is the man who will dare to advise
 such a measure ? My lords, His Majesty succeeded
 to an empire as great in extent as its reputation
 was unsullied. Shall we tarnish the lustre of this
 nation by an ignominious surrender of its rights and
 fairest possessions ? Shall this great kingdom, that
 has survived whole and entire the Danish depreda-
 tions, the Scottish inroads, and the Norman con-
 quest ; that has stood the threatened invasion of the
 Spanish armada, now fall prostrate before the house
 of Bourbon ? Surely, this nation is no longer what
 it was ! Shall a people, seventeen years ago the ter-
 ror of the world, now stoop so low as to tell its an-
 cient inveterate enemy — take all we have, only
 give us peace ? It is impossible ! I wage war with
 no man, or set of men. I wish for none of their em-
 ployments ; nor would I co-operate with men who
 still persist in unretracted error ; or who, instead of
 acting on a firm, decisive line of conduct, halt be-
 tween two opinions, where there is no middle path.
 In God's name, if it is absolutely necessary to de-
 clare either for peace or war, and if peace cannot be
 preserved with honour, why is not war commenced

haps more than at any former period, both from his own situation, and from the im-
 portance of the subject on which he spoke. He gave the whole history of the Amer-
 ican war ; of all the measures to which he had objected ; and all the evils which he
 had prophesied, in consequence of them, adding at the end of each, " And so it
 proved ! "

without hesitation? I am not, I confess, well informed of the resources of this kingdom; but I trust it has still sufficient to maintain its just rights, though I know them not. But any state is better than despair. Let us at least make one effort; and if we must fall, let us fall like men!"

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1778.

The Duke
of Rich-
mond's
reply.

The Duke of Richmond, after replying to the arguments of Lord Weymouth, directed his attention to those of Lord Chatham, for whose person and opinions he professed the highest veneration and respect; no one had a more grateful memory of the services which he had rendered to the country, raising its glory, reputation, and successes to an height never before experienced by any nation. But the name of Chatham could not perform impossibilities, or restore the country to the state in which it stood when he was called to direct its counsels. Our finances were then most flourishing, resulting from the abilities and indefatigable zeal of that great man and able financier, Mr. Pelham; our fleet was in a respectable condition, and under the direction of a most able naval officer, Lord Anson. The influence of the crown had not reached its present alarming and dangerous height. We had for the most part of the war, France alone to contend with; and when Spain commenced hostilities, France was reduced to the lowest ebb; her navy almost annihilated; and her principal colonies in the new world wrested from her. America then fought for us; in the present exigency, instead of Great Britain and America against France and Spain; France, Spain, and America, would be united against Great Britain. As Lord Chatham had not only omitted to point out the means of sustaining so unequal a contest, but had acknowledged he knew them not, the Duke adhered to his former opinion. No person more sincerely wished the perpetuation of American dependence; but being convinced of its total impracticability, he was anxious to retain the colonists as allies, because

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1778.

if they are not on terms of friendship with Great Britain, they must throw themselves into the arms of France ; and if war was commenced on account of the late treaty, they would consider themselves bound in honour to assist their ally. The noble Earl, as a reason for war, had mentioned the inherent rights of the heir apparent and his brother : to recover those possessions by force, was now totally impracticable, but he would join in calling to a severe account, those who had caused the loss of their inheritance. The provocation given by France, on account of her conduct respecting America, did not compel the adoption of resentful measures ; Queen Elizabeth openly abetted the revolt of the Spanish Netherlands, and assisted the insurgents for a series of years with men and money ; Philip the Second, far from resenting, scarcely seemed to notice the circumstance. He was already sufficiently embarrassed ; and did not consider himself bound, either in honour or policy, to create more enemies than he was able to contend with ; yet Philip was, at that time, the most powerful prince in Europe.

Lord Chatham's sudden illness.

At the close of this speech, Lord Chatham animated with disdain, and eager to reply, rose from his seat ; but the effort was too mighty for his enfeebled frame, and after repeated attempts to retain his position, he sunk in a swoon. The House became a scene of alarm and agitation, and the debate was closed.*

Death of Lord Chatham.

Although he soon recovered from the fit, and the public entertained sanguine hopes of the re-estab-

* As this narrative stood in three former editions, I have permitted it to remain ; but, on authority which demands my entire confidence, I am obliged to qualify some parts. Lord Chatham could not so entirely surmount the effects of indisposition, but that his voice was feeble throughout his speech, although his articulation was as perfect as at any period of his life. The Duke of Richmond did not speak of him with appearances, although he might in words, of veneration and respect, but, on the contrary, with such indications of asperity, that Lord Chatham frequently denoted by the motion of his head, in the course of the Duke's speech, that he observed and would reply to the offensive parts of it. Before its conclusion, Lord Chatham underwent the convulsion which interrupted the debate and terminated in his death.

lishment of his health, this stroke was the forerunner of death. He languished a few weeks at Hayes, where he was conveyed by his own desire, and expired in the seventieth year of his age.

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1778.
11th May.

As soon as the event was known, Colonel Barré moved for an address, requesting that the remains of this illustrious statesman should be interred at the public expense in Westminster Abbey. Mr. T. Townshend seconded the motion, with a pathetic eulogy on the extraordinary merits of its object. Mr. Rigby thought a monument to his memory would be a more eligible, as well as a more lasting testimony of the public gratitude, than defraying the expenses of his funeral. Mr. Dunning combined both the propositions, by adding Mr. Rigby's suggestion to Colonel Barré's motion, as an amendment ; and the resolution was carried, after a few approving words from Lord North, who entered the House at a late period of the debate.

Honours
paid to his
memory by
the House
of Com-
mons.

The King readily agreed to the addresses ; and many members pronounced emphatical encomiums on the deceased peer. Lord John Cavendish hoped the first vote would not be the limit of public gratitude. As that invaluable man had, whilst in the nation's service, neglected his own interests ; and though he had the greatest opportunity of enriching himself, had not accumulated opulence for his family, he hoped ample provision would be made for the descendants of so honest and able a minister. This suggestion was cordially adopted, and a bill passed, in consequence of a message from the King, for annexing four thousand pounds a-year to the title of Earl of Chatham, while it continued in the heirs of the deceased statesman. The munificence of parliament was completed, by a vote of twenty thousand pounds for payment of his debts.

13th.
Annuity
annexed to
his title.

Lord Shelburne moved, that the House of Peers should attend the funeral ; but the motion was overruled by the majority of a single vote.* The annuity

21st May.

His debts
paid by
parliament.

13th.
Proceedings
of the House
of Lords.

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1778.

2d June.

The annuity
Bill opposed.

bill, which passed so harmoniously through the House of Commons, occasioned a violent debate in the Lords. The Duke of Chandos opposed the grant as an unwarrantable profusion of the public money in times of urgent distress, and as a dangerous precedent; grants in perpetuity, were taxes in perpetuity; and ought not to be incautiously ratified by parliament. The precedent might be extended to sanction applications of a similar nature, and proper objects would not be wanting; Lord Hawke, Lord Amherst, and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, were cited as instances where the national bounty would be unexceptionably bestowed.

In answer, the peculiar merits of Lord Chatham were urged; and a sarcastic application was made to the possessors of sinecure places without merit, to deduct from their emoluments the provision proposed for the family of so illustrious an ornament to the British name.

In consequence of some observations by the Lord Chancellor, the whole political conduct of the deceased Earl came under review, and was by some strenuously censured, as the source of all the subsequent disasters of the country; by some partially defended, as founded on integrity, prosecuted with vigour, but occasionally deficient in consistency and wisdom; by others it was extolled in all its parts, as the prodigious effort of a superior genius, who had forced his way at a critical emergency, raised the spirits of a desponding nation, given energy to vacillating counsels, and raised the country to unrivalled glory. The supposed errors in his conduct were ascribed to the rancour of party, and to that unextinguishable spirit of envy which ought to have died with its object.^t The bill passed.^u A short protest is on the journals, signed by four peers.^x

^t The principal speakers in this debate were the Lord Chancellor, the Dukes of Richmond and Chandos, Earls of Abingdon, Radnor, Shelburne, and Camden, Lords Lyttleton and Ravensworth.

^u 42 to 11.

^x The Lord Chancellor (Bathurst), the Duke of Chandos, the Archbishop of York (Markham), and Lord Paget.

The posthumous compliments to Lord Chatham were not confined to the Houses of parliament, which he had adorned, instructed, and dignified by his eloquence: the Common Council of London petitioned the House of Commons and the throne, for the honour of receiving his remains, and interring them in the cathedral of St. Paul's, thus rendering the noblest edifice in the British dominions, the depository of one among the noblest subjects of the empire. These petitions were unsuccessful; orders having already been given for the interment in Westminster Abbey. They also petitioned for notice to attend his funeral in their gowns; but taking offence at some point of conduct in the Lord Chamberlain, rescinded the resolution. They erected, however, a superb monument to his memory in Guildhall. The body lay in state two days in the painted chamber, and was interred with great solemnity, though but thinly attended.^y

The debate, interrupted by the illness of Lord Chatham, was resumed the ensuing day. The contest was maintained between two chiefs of the leading parties in opposition; the Earl of Shelburne, and the Duke of Richmond. The Earl, cordially adopting the principles of Lord Chatham, that the moment Great Britain acknowledged the sovereignty or independency of America, her sun was set, and that a war with France was unavoidable, censured the arguments tending to inspire despondency. He spoke with confidence of the sufficiency of Great Britain, both in population and finance, to resist America, France, and Spain, united. The Duke of Richmond fully acceded to our ability to cope with France and Spain, but America must be our ally, or at least neuter; he was for an immediate concession

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Honours paid him by the Common Council of London.

20th and 26th May.

25th May.
6th June.

7th and 8th June.

His funeral.

8th June.
Debate re-sumed on the Duke of Richmond's motion.

^y Lord Chatham's funeral, Gibbon observes, was meanly attended, and government ingeniously contrived to secure the double odium of suffering the thing to be done, and of doing it with an ill grace. *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i. p. 582. The other particulars are taken from the Debates, and the Appendix to the Chronicle in the *Annual Register* for 1778.

CHAP. of independency : both agreed in condemning the
 XXXIII. conduct of ministers, but they did not interfere in
 1778. the debate, either to vindicate themselves or deliver
 an opinion on the motion, which was negatived. ²

2d July.
 Adjourn-
 ment of par-
 liament.
 King's
 speech.

Notwithstanding the length and extreme activity of the session, motions were made in both Houses to prevent the adjournment. The King, in discharging the parliament from, what he justly termed, a long and laborious application to business, returned thanks for their zeal in supporting the honour of his crown, and for their attention to the real interests of his subjects, in the wise, just, and humane laws which had resulted from their deliberations, and which he hoped would be attended with the most salutary effects in every part of the British empire. His desire to preserve the tranquillity of Europe had been uniform and sincere; the faith of treaties and the law of nations his rule of conduct, and his constant care to give no just cause of offence to any foreign power; "let that power, by whom this tranquillity shall be disturbed, he said, answer to their subjects, and to the world, for all the fatal consequences of war." He trusted the experienced valour and discipline of his fleets and armies, and the loyal and united ardour of the nation, armed and animated in the defence of every thing dear to them, would defeat all enterprises of the enemy, and convince them how dangerous it was to provoke the spirit and strength of Great Britain. He had no other wish or object but to deserve the confidence of parliament, and the affections of his people.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

1778.

Expeditions from Philadelphia. — State of the British army. — And of that under Washington. — Treachery of congress towards Burgoyne's army. — Drafts of the conciliatory bills sent to congress. — Their resolutions. — Effects of the measure. — Arrival of the French treaty. — Its effect. — La Fayette's expedition to Barren-hill. — Sir William Howe recalled. — Superb festival called Mischianza. — Arrival of the Commissioners. — Passport refused to their Secretary. — Terms proposed by them to congress. — Answer. — Explanatory letter of the commissioners. — Pretended offers of bribes. — Discussions respecting Governor Johnstone. — Manifesto of the commissioners. — Resolutions. — And counter-manifesto of congress. — Evacuation of Philadelphia. — Severities exercised against loyalists. — Judicious retreat of Sir Henry Clinton. — Action at Monmouth-court-house. — British army go to New York. — Disgrace of General Lee. — Sailing of the Toulon squadron under D'Estaing. — Pursued by Byron. — The French arrive at the Chesapeake. — Expedition against Rhode Island. — Actions at sea. — The Americans repulsed at Rhode Island. — Lord Howe resigns the fleet to Admiral Gambier. — Expedition to Buzzard's Bay. — Surprise of Colonel Baylor. — Attack on Egg Harbour. — Pulaski's legion cut to pieces. — Reduction of Georgia. — Destruction of Wyoming. — And other settlements. — Disappointments of Byron. — D'Estaing sails to the West Indies. — Capture of Saint Pierre and Miquelon. — The French take Dominica. — The English Saint Lucie. — Indignation of the Americans against D'Estaing. — His proclamation to the Canadians. — Washington refuses to co-operate in attacking Canada. — Hatred of the Americans towards the French.

DURING the period of their continuance in winter quarters at Philadelphia, the British army confined their efforts to foraging parties; one under the gallant Colonel Mawhood, made a suc-

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Expeditions
from Phila-
delphia.

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March
1778.
4th May.

7th May.

State of the
British army.

cessful excursion to New Jersey, and defeated superior detachments of Americans with great loss. Colonel Abercrombie and Major Sincoe surprised a portion of the American baggage, and returned to Philadelphia without disaster, though their co-operation was not so complete as was originally projected. Major Maitland and Captain Henry of the navy, destroyed a quantity of stores and forty-four American vessels, which had escaped up the Delaware after the capture of Mud Island.

These unimportant exploits, however gallant and well conducted, were insufficient to atone for the want of some capital enterprise during the long winter. The army exhibited a contrast of immoderate luxury, and excessive misery. Gaming was carried to an unwarrantable extent; and the grave, staid inhabitants of Philadelphia, were shocked and insulted by some young officers, who introduced into their sober families, females of exceptionable character. The vigilance of General Washington, and the extreme severity with which he punished the peasantry for attempting to bring provisions to market, occasioned continual scarcity of necessaries; and the inhabitants, offended by the dissipation of the army, and the pressure of calamity occasioned by their presence, became inimical to the British government. Individuals avowedly friendly to congress were, through negligence, allowed to reside in the city; and by conveying intelligence to the enemy of intended movements, enabled them to impede supplies, and harass small foraging parties.

Condition of
Washington.

General Washington in his huts at Valley Forge experienced, with aggravations, all the difficulties of the preceding winters. He was destitute of every necessary; disease consumed, and desertion thinned his army; at one period he was reduced to less than four thousand men, and his cannon fixed to the ground by the frost: but he made indefatigable exertions to remedy these inconveniences, of which he gives an

alarming picture in one of his letters to congress: “ Our distress for arms and clothing,” he says, “ is amazingly great; we have many men now without firelocks, and many coming in, in the same predicament; and half the army are without shirts. Our condition for want of the latter and blankets, is quite painful, of the former very distressing. The doctors attribute, in a great degree, the loss of hundreds of lives to the scarcity of clothing; and I am certain hundreds have deserted from the same cause.”^a In vain experiments were tried to engage the Indians; in vain congress issued requisitions for the enrolment of forces in the different states; men could not be induced to encounter the severities of winter, without view of service or probability of relief; and the general did not expect any important accession of force till toward June.^b The desertion of the troops was countenanced by frequent resignations of officers, of whom upward of two hundred threw up their commissions in the space of six months.^c Nor was this distressing consequence of the short-sighted parsimony of congress remedied, till, in compliance with the judicious suggestion of their general, they allotted to the officers half-pay for seven years after the war; a bounty which was subsequently extended to the period of their lives.^d

Parsimony was not the only vice of congress, against which General Washington ventured to remonstrate. By the convention at Saratoga, Boston was designated as the place where the British troops were to wait for a conveyance home: General Burgoyne applied to congress for leave to change this place for Rhode Island, or some other more convenient port; but the American representatives, recollecting that if these forces were restored to

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XXXIV.
1775.

April.

Treachery
of congress
toward
Burgoyne's
army.

^a Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 280. See also a letter from the committee to congress, in Stedman's History of the American War, vol. i. p. 312.

^b Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 262. 274.

^c Idem, p. 252.

^d Ramsay, vol. ii. p. 98.

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1778.

Great Britain, they might be rendered serviceable in garrisons, and an equal number detached to their shores, not only refused the general's request, but prohibited the embarkation of the captive troops, until a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention of Saratoga should be properly notified by the court of Great Britain to congress. This infamous perfidy was palliated by pretended suspicions that General Burgoyne's men would join the army at New York, and by allegations equally frivolous and false, of their having already broken the convention. General Washington remonstrated with force and firmness against this national act of dishonour, which he represented alike injurious to the cause in the breasts of Britons, foreigners, and even their own American adherents^c; but his reasonings were vain, the unfortunate army was subjected to great hardships and wanton indignities, removed from place to place, according to the caprice of congress, and notwithstanding the most explicit and candid offers and assurances, the terms of the convention were never complied with.

Drafts of the
conciliatory
bills sent to
congress.

21st April.
Their resolu-
tion.

Feeling the necessity of embracing the earliest moment to counteract the views of France in her late treaty with America, the British ministry, before the passing of the conciliatory bills, transmitted drafts to America, that the ratification of congress to the French treaty might not be obtained by surprise, while the country was yet ignorant of the terms on which an accommodation with the parent-state might be obtained. Sir William Howe circulated copies; General Washington also transmitted some to congress, with expressions of apprehension that the measure might be successful in detaching adherents from their cause.^f In pursuance of his recommendation, the representative body appointed a committee to investigate the bills, who without hesitation rejected the proposals. The report of the committee, which was produced in

^c See Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 266.

^f Idem, p. 266.

a single day, was more than ordinarily petulant and virulent; the bills were analysed, and declared to originate in dishonest views, and to prove only the weakness of Great Britain: and it was decreed, that any individual, or body of men, making separate or partial conventions with commissioners under the crown of Great Britain, ought to be treated as open enemies. No conference or treaty could be held with the commissioners, unless as a preliminary, they either withdrew the fleets and armies, or in express terms acknowledged the independence of America. These resolutions were accompanied with an exhortation to the colonies, to complete their quotas of men; and followed by a promise of pardon under strict restrictions, to those who had appeared in arms against them.^g

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XXXIV.
1778.

23d April.

Effects
of this
measure.

These proceedings fully verified the predictions, that the minister's ductility would not be attended with the desired effect, and that he did not, like the spear of Achilles, possess the power of healing the wound he had himself inflicted.^h The American friends of Great Britain attempting to circulate these propositions, enabled their opponents to assert, that, instead of seeking peace by the ordinary modes of negotiation with powers legitimately constituted, government aimed at an undue influence over the people, and hoped to obtain by their impatient clamours, that which the sagacity of their rulers would withhold.

Shortly after these resolutions had passed, Simeon Deane arrived, and notified the accomplishment of the treaty with France. The expectation of this event had long animated the Americans, and influenced the decision of congress. The probability of a war between Great Britain and France, had long been maintainedⁱ, and congress asserted that the British cabinet proposed the conciliatory bills only in consequence of their

2d May.
Arrival of
the French
treaty.

^g See the resolutions in Almon's Remembrancer, vol. vi. p. 163.

^h Gibbon's Posthumous Works, vol. i. p. 561.

ⁱ Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 215.

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alarm at such a juncture.^k The hesitation of the French court in ratifying the treaty, did not permit them to be too confident, but they knew they could always retract resolutions formed before the proposition to the House of Commons had been sanctioned with all the legislative forms.

4th May.
Its effect.

The confirmation of the French alliance was received with unbounded joy, as the test and guaranty of American independence. Congress made a partial publication of the treaty, ascribing the most noble and disinterested views to the French King, who would rank among the greatest heroes of history, and whose example would decide the rest of Europe. Spain and Germany would join without delay: Russia and Denmark were not adverse to them; and the King of Prussia had declared to their envoy, that he would be the second power in Europe to acknowledge their independence.^l La Fayette, who flattered himself that his remonstrances had considerably influenced the decision of his court, communicated the event with childish transport, to the sedate general of the Americans; the brigades were assembled, the chaplains offered up public thanks to Almighty God, and delivered discourses suitable to the occasion. A *feu de joie* was fired, and, on a signal given, the air resounded with “Long live the King of France.”

La Fayette's
expedition
to Barren
Hill.

9th May.

La Fayette, from the moment of joining the American army, impatiently desired to be intrusted with some distinguished command. His continued solicitations occasioned considerable embarrassment to the American general^m; on the present occasion, it was judged necessary to indulge him with the desired opportunity of displaying his supposed military knowledge. General Washington therefore detached him, with nearly three thousand men, to take post on Barren Hill, seven miles advanced from the camp of

^k Almon's Remembrancer, vol. vi. p. 163.

^l Idem, vol. vi. p. 167.

^m Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 216.

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Valley Forge; but on the opposite side of the river, for the purpose of moving between the Delaware and Schuylkill, restraining the British parties, procuring intelligence, and acting as circumstances might require.ⁿ This position was not judiciously chosen; it was too distant from Philadelphia, to effect any important purpose, and too near to be secure against a well-concerted enterprise. General Grant, at the head of five thousand select troops, was dispatched from Philadelphia to surprise La Fayette, and reached, undiscovered, a point in his rear, between him and General Washington's camp. Here the road forked; one branch led to Barren Hill, at the distance of a mile; the other to Matson's Ford, across the Schuylkill at the same distance. In the course of the night another detachment, under General Grey, marched from Philadelphia, along the western branch of the Schuylkill, and stationed themselves at a ford two or three miles in front of La Fayette's right flank, while the remainder of the British army advanced to Chestnut Hill. His retreat was thus cut off from every passage but Matson's Ford; and as the line from his position formed the base of an obtuse-angled triangle with the two roads, his distance from it was much greater than that of the British. The confused galloping of a reconnoitring party of horse, indicated their having discovered the approach of the British. La Fayette was soon observed retreating with precipitation and terror toward Matson's Ford, through the low woody grounds which border the river. In vain were these favourable circumstances mentioned by Sir William Erskine to General Grant; he obstinately persevered in advancing to Barren Hill, from which La Fayette had already retreated, and after some delay, began a pursuit along the same tract which the enemy had taken. In their precipitate flight, the Americans had crossed the Schuylkill, leaving six field-pieces as an useless incum-

20th.
His imminent danger;

and escape.

ⁿ Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 279.

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brance ; but the dilatoriness of the pursuit emboldened them to return and recover this artillery, and the whole corps, which was considered as inevitably destroyed, escaped with no other loss than forty men. General Washington in despair had broken down his bridge from Valley Forge across the Schuylkill, being insufficient in force to succour his volunteer ally, and apprehensive lest the success of the British arms should be turned against himself. The failure of the enterprise against La Fayette was the more mortifying, from the critical period at which it occurred, and the consequences of success on the events either of war or negotiation.

Sir William
Howe re-
called.

14th April.
Superb festi-
val, called
Mischianza.
18th May.

Since the termination of the last campaign, Sir William Howe had been soliciting his recal ; he felt, it appears, some jealousy, that confidence was not extended to him, nor due attention paid to his commendations ; a charge not considered as well founded by those who compared his means of achievement, with the results of his efforts, and which afterward gave rise to serious discussions in parliament. He received permission to retire, and at his departure was gratified with the sincerest, and perhaps the most splendid homage to his personal character, which was ever paid by an army to its general. At the expence of twenty-two field officers, a festival was prepared, called the Mischianza, forming a brilliant exhibition of ancient chivalry, and modern politeness. Knights and squires, superbly accoutred, tilting in honour of ladies, who in magnificent Turkish habits distributed the rewards of valour ; a promenade with music, a splendid supper, and a ball, terminated the festivities ; a faro-table was not forgotten, and every part of the entertainment was distinguished by complimentary mottos and devices. In descanting on such a mark of esteem, it would savour of cynical moroseness, to examine whether all expressions of applause tendered to the general were strictly just in their utmost extent ; but the suffering

loyalists, and many others, thought the generals, officers and army, might have been better employed.^o

Soon after the chief command had devolved on Sir Henry Clinton, Lord Carlisle, Governor Johnstone, and Mr. Eden, the commissioners appointed by the conciliatory act, arrived at Philadelphia. Application was made to General Washington for a passport for their secretary, Dr. Ferguson, to convey overtures to congress; but this favour was harshly refused, and the letters of the commissioners forwarded by common military posts. If the wanton insolence of this proceeding augured an unfavourable issue to the negotiation, the commissioners were not unjustifiable in entertaining hopes of ultimate success, from the extraordinary liberality of the terms they were empowered to propose; terms which promised to America happiness more permanent, and charters more extensive, than could, according to the common chances of war, be derived from the alliance of any European powers, and more ample than in the ordinary train of events, the lapse of ages could produce. They professed more real freedom than, under all circumstances, could be expected to flow from an acquiescence in their unsupported independence, and more permanent prosperity than successful warfare or multiplied alliances could entitle them to anticipate. The commissioners offered to concur in every satisfactory and just arrangement for procuring a cessation of hostilities by sea and land; a renewal of free intercourse; revival of mutual affection, and restoration of the common benefits of naturalization throughout the empire; the extension of free trade; an agreement that no military force should be maintained in America, without the consent of the general congress, or particular assemblies; and concurrence in measures calculated to discharge the debts of America, and raise the value and credit of the paper circulation.

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1778.
Arrival of
the com-
missioners.
6th June.
Passport
refused to
their Secre-
tary.

9th June.
Terms pro-
posed by
them to
congress.

^o See account of the Mischianza in the Annual Register, 1778. Appendix to the Chronicle.

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To perpetuate the union, a reciprocal deputation of an agent or agents from the different states was proposed, who should have a seat and voice in parliament; or if sent from Britain a seat and voice in the assemblies of the different states to which they might be deputed. It was finally proposed to establish the legislative powers in each particular state, to settle its revenue, civil and military establishment, and acknowledge its right to exercise a perfect freedom of legislation and internal government, so that the British states throughout America, acting with the mother-country in peace and war, under a common sovereign, might have the irrevocable enjoyment of every privilege which did not imply a total separation of interest, or was consistent with that union of force, on which the safety of common religion and liberty depended. The commissioners noticed with due severity, the insidious interposition of a power which had, from the first settlement of the colonies, been actuated by enmity to them as well as to Great Britain; and notwithstanding the pretended date, or present form of the French offers to America, yet it was notorious that these were made in consequence of plans of accommodation previously concerted in Great Britain, and with a view to prevent reconciliation and prolong the war.

13th June.
Debates.

16th.

17th.
Answer.

When this dispatch was read in congress, the members most infatuated with the predilection for French alliance, opposed a further hearing, as insulting to the King of France. The debate was so earnestly maintained, that it became necessary to adjourn the sitting from Friday till Monday, when congress referred the letter to a committee of five, who prepared the draft of an answer, which was approved and transmitted to the commissioners. It stated, that nothing but an earnest desire to spare the further effusion of human blood, could have induced them to read a paper containing expressions so disrespectful to His most Christian Majesty, the good and great ally

of the states, or consider propositions so derogatory to the honour of an independent nation. The acts of the British parliament, the commission from the King, and the letter of the commissioners, supposed the people of America subject to the crown of Great Britain, and were founded on an idea of dependence utterly inadmissible. Congress were inclined to peace, notwithstanding the unjust claims from which the war originated, and the savage manner in which it had been conducted ; they would therefore be content to enter on a consideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconsistent with treaties already subsisting, when the King of Great Britain should demonstrate a sincere disposition for that purpose. The only solid proof of this disposition would be an explicit acknowledgment of independence, or the withdrawing of his fleets and armies.

Notwithstanding the unpromising harshness of these measures, the commissioners, unwilling to abandon their cause till quite desperate, addressed to congress an explanatory paper. On the required acknowledgment they said, “ We are not inclined to dispute the meaning of words ; but so far as you mean the entire privilege of the people of North America to dispose of their property and govern themselves without reference to Great Britain, beyond what is necessary to preserve that union of force in which our mutual advantage and safety consist, we think that so far independency is fully acknowledged in the terms of our letter of the tenth of June ; and we are willing to enter on a fair discussion of all the circumstances that may be necessary to insure or even to enlarge that independency.” They assigned as a reason for not withdrawing the fleets and armies, the danger of the measure to those of the colonists who had espoused the cause of Great Britain, and the necessity of precaution against their ancient enemy. How soon it should follow the first reciprocal advances to peace, would depend on the favourable

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Explanatory
letter of the
commiss-
sioners.
11th July.

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prospect congress should give of a reconciliation with their fellow-citizens, the loyalists of America, and with those in Great Britain. They declared their judgment not biassed by any probable military events, but that their first proposition should in all cases be the rule of their conduct; and claimed from congress a disclosure of the treaty with France, which that body avowed as influencing their conduct, but of which the commissioners had no means of forming an adequate judgment.

18th.

To this letter the congress resolved, that no answer should be given.

Publications
by members
of congress.

These haughty proceedings convinced the commissioners of the ascendancy of the French party, and the inutility of further attempts. Congress, however, had reason to apprehend that their constituents would not be satisfied with the rejection of so desirable an alliance with their parent-state, while the boon of independence was begged from their habitual enemy: they could not, in their public capacity, enter into an investigation of the letter of the commissioners; but individual members, through the channel of the press, published insulting and scurrilous comments, without disguising their interference, or disclaiming their anonymous productions.^p

Pretended
offers of
bribes.
9th July.

Congress, however, did not willingly submit to lose any opportunity of extracting from the transactions with the commissioners, topics of abuse against Great Britain. Under a pretence that they had received private information of an attempt by Governor Johnstone to corrupt Joseph Reid, one of their members, they ordered that all letters received by members of congress, or their agents, of a public nature, should be laid before them. In consequence of this resolution, a letter written by Governor Johnstone to Francis Dana, in which he related some private

^p See some of these Letters by Samuel Adams and William Henry Drayton, in Almon's Remembrancer, vol. vi. pp. 300, 307. vol. vii. pp. 19, 20. See also Ramsay, vol. ii. p. 74.

anecdotes respecting the French treaty ^q, and two others from the same commissioner to General Joseph Reid ^r and Robert Morris ^s were produced. In these epistles, as well as one previously read in congress, he imprudently extolled the exalted characters of the members, mentioned his exertions in behalf of America in the House of Commons, and intimated that views of personal aggrandisement, if entertained either by members of congress, or of the military body, might be fully gratified by forwarding a reconciliation with Great Britain. In aid of these imperfect intimations, a supposed conversation was narrated between General Reid, and a married lady of character, having connexions with the British army, who informed the general that Governor Johnstone had expressed favourable sentiments of him, and wished to engage his interest in promoting a re-union between Great Britain and America; for which service, if consistent with his principles and judgment, he should receive ten thousand pounds, and any office in the colonies in the King's power to bestow. This bountiful offer, made by an unauthorised married lady, after the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British army, the general refused; "He was not," he said, "worth purchasing; but such as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it."^t

Upon this vague information, and two general paragraphs in the governor's letters, congress founded resolutions, That they could only be considered as daring and atrocious attempts to bribe and corrupt their integrity; and demonstrated their highest and most pointed indignation, by pronouncing it incom-

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11th Aug.
Resolutions
respecting
Governor
Johnstone.

^q Dated 10th June.

^r Dated 11th April, near two months before the governor's arrival in America.

^s Dated 16th June.

^t When about to depart from America, Governor Johnstone wrote to Dr. Adam Ferguson, expressly denying the truth of Mr. Reid's statement, so far as it applied to him. Dr. Ferguson published the letter, and averred that the governor had deposited in his hands proofs of the truth of its contents, though he was prohibited by express injunctions, and the fear of exposing individuals to the cruel persecution of congress, from making them public. See Remembrancer, vol. vii. p. 336.

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26th.

Answer of
the commis-
sioners.

patible with their honour, to hold any correspondence with Governor Johnstone, or to negotiate with him in affairs interesting the cause of liberty and virtue.^u The other commissioners disclaimed all knowledge of the transaction^x, and Governor Johnstone, in an angry declaration, declined continuing to act in his commission. He reproached congress with their perfidy toward the army of Saratoga; and their resisting, through motives of ambition, the liberal offers of the British government; while they publicly prostrated themselves before a French ambassador, and entered into a league with the inveterate enemies of both countries.^y

7th Aug.
Correspon-
dence about
Burgoyne's
army.
26th.

3d Oct.
Manifesto
of the com-
missioners.

The further correspondence with congress was of small moment: the commissioners had already made a requisition to fulfil the convention of Saratoga, which was with equal perfidy and stubbornness refused. After several unavailing efforts to attain this point, they published a manifesto and proclamation, addressed separately to the congress, the general assemblies and conventions of provinces, the people at large, the ministers of religion, and the lovers of peace. The members of congress were reminded of their responsibility to their country, to the world, and to God, for the continuance of the war, and its concomitant miseries. The commissioners did not desire

^u See this declaration, Almon's Remembrancer, vol. vii. p. 14. and Governor Johnstone's Letters at length, same vol. pp. 8, 9, 10.

^x In the course of this letter, the commissioners descended at large on the mode in which the treaty with France had been granted; they described that nation as a known enemy to all civil and religious liberty, and observed, that on a review of her whole conduct, her designs, the ingenerous motives of her policy, and the degree of faith due to her professions, would become too obvious to need illustration. La Fayette, with characteristic petulance and absurdity, founded, on this joint public paper, a challenge to single combat, which he addressed to Lord Carlisle: the English nobleman said, he found it difficult to return a serious answer; La Fayette ought to have known that he was responsible to his King and country alone, and not to any individual for his public conduct and language. If his opinions or expressions were not retracted in public, he should never give an account of them, much less retract them in private. This deservedly contemptuous answer terminated the correspondence. The letters are in Almon's Remembrancer, vol. vii. p. 174.

^y Remembrancer, vol. vi. p. 14. See also Stedman, c. xxvi.

to obtain the objects of their pursuit by fomenting popular divisions, and party cabals ; but it was their wish, and their duty, to encourage and support individuals or bodies in their return to loyalty and amity ; and if separation from Great Britain was pursued through the medium of a pretended alliance with France, the whole nature and future conduct of the war must be altered. Policy and benevolence had hitherto restrained the extremes of hostility, in distressing a people still considered as British subjects, and desolating a country, shortly to become again the source of mutual advantage ; but when that country professed the unnatural design, not only of estranging herself from the mother-country, but of mortgaging herself and her resources to an inveterate enemy, the contest would be changed ; and the question would be, how far Great Britain might destroy, or render useless a connection contrived for her ruin, and for the aggrandisement of France. Under such circumstances, the laws of self-preservation directed, that, if the British colonies were to become an accession to France, the acquisition should be rendered of the smallest possible value. General pardons were proffered to all who should withdraw from the service of congress within forty days, and to the colonies at large, or separately, a general or separate peace, with the revival of their ancient government, secured against future infringement, and protected from British taxation.

Congress answered this manifesto by resolutions, exhorting the people, when the King's troops should begin burning or destroying any town, to retaliate on the houses and properties of all tories, and enemies to American independence, and secure their persons ; abstaining however from wanton cruelties, as congress would not imitate their enemies, or their German, negro, and copper-coloured allies.

In conformity with these observations, they also issued a counter-manifesto, vaunting, with the solem-

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10th Oct.
Resolutions.30th.
And coun-
ter-man-
ifesto of con-
gress.

CHAP. nity of a religious appeal, their clemency and philanthropy, and reproaching the subjects of Great Britain with devastating the open country, burning defenceless villages, and butchering American citizens. Their prisons had been the slaughter-houses of soldiers, their ships of seamen, and cruel injuries were aggravated by gross insults. Foiled in a vain attempt to subjugate the unconquerable spirit of freedom, the commissioners had meanly assailed the representatives of America with bribes, deceit, and servile adulation. They mocked humanity by wanton destruction, religion by impious appeals to God, whilst violating his sacred commands, and mocked reason itself, by endeavouring to prove that the liberty and happiness of America, could safely be intrusted to those who had sold their own. Stung by merited contempt, they had solicited individuals to break the bonds of allegiance, and imbrue their souls with the blackest of crimes ; but fearing that none could be found sufficiently wicked for that purpose, they had endeavoured to influence the weak, by threatening more wide devastation. In conclusion, congress declared, that if the British army presumed to execute their threats, or persisted in their career of barbarity, exemplary vengeance should deter others from similar conduct.

Evacuation
of Philadel-
phia.

If the treaty with France was calculated to raise the spirits, and confirm the pertinacity of congress, the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British troops tended to increase the effect. This measure was not unexpected, it was known to be in contemplation before the arrival of the commissioners² ; and although the policy of the measure was evident, it was regarded as a proof of alarm and weakness. In contemplation of a French war, the British ministry ordered the removal of the troops from Philadelphia, which was situate a hundred miles from the sea, and accessible only by a

² Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 281. 286.

winding river, to New York, a more central position, and a commodious and desirable residence for the army.

Sir Henry Clinton never affected to conceal his intention, but on the contrary, gave notice to General Washington of the time and course of his retreat. He evacuated the city without the slightest impediment, though the Americans took possession before the whole army had departed. General Clinton's march was encumbered by a great body of loyalists, who, with their whole property followed the army; they were driven to this necessity by the cruel neglect of congress, who, in opposition to the sagacious and humane advice of General Washington, adopted no resolution for rendering their continuance in Philadelphia secure.^a The apprehensions of the fugitives were proved to be not unfounded by the severe proceedings against the partizans of the royal cause, who ventured to remain: their property was confiscated, their persons banished or imprisoned, and two respectable Quakers, Roberts and Carlisle suffered death.

The British army, encumbered with baggage and provisions, embarrassed with difficult roads, and extending twelve miles in length, proceeded slowly. General Washington had sent parties forward to break down the bridges and harass the march; yet he kept a respectful distance, suspicious that his adversary was endeavouring to lure him from his advantageous situation and force an engagement in the lower country; or that by a rapid movement, the British General might possess himself of the heights. During the progress of Sir Henry Clinton, the American detachments were constantly re-inforced with chosen men; General Gates was placed on the opposite side of the Rariton river, in front of the British army, while General Washington in the rear and on the left behind Milestone Creek, was ready

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1778.
18th June.
Able retreat
of Clinton.

Severities
exercised
against the
loyalists.

Slow march
of the
British
army.

^a Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 283.

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1778.

28th June
Action at
Monmouth
Court-
house.

to effect a junction with Gates ; but Clinton escaped the danger of this combination, by sagaciously directing his course toward Sandy Hook, and passing to the right instead of crossing the Rariton.

At Freehold court-house, in the county of Monmouth, Sir Henry Clinton perceived the enemy approaching to attack the baggage, committed to the charge of General Knyphausen. He made a vigorous attack on their front line, strongly posted under the command of General Lee, and compelled him to retire. He then drove back the second line from a position equally strong, while Knyphausen repulsed parties of the enemy who attacked the baggage. Here the affair ought to have terminated ; but the light troops, with ungovernable impetuosity, pursued the fugitives under General Lee, till they were met and rallied by General Washington, and to prevent them from being entirely cut off, Sir Henry Clinton was obliged to maintain his position exposed to a severe cross-fire. Having effected this purpose, and seeing no hope of making an advantageous assault on the enemy, who were protected by defiles and marshes, he withdrew from the field, to the same ground he had quitted in the morning. The loss on each side was nearly equal, amounting to about three hundred and sixty.^b The British Colonel Monckton was particularly lamented ; during the heat of the engagement, and in the midst of a heavy cannonade, his brave followers dug his grave with their bayonets, and threw in the earth with their hands.

Embar-
cation of the
British army
for New
York.
5th July,

Having permitted his troops to repose till ten o'clock at night, the British general silently retreated to join General Knyphausen, and without further impediment worthy of notice, embarked at Sandy Hook, and reached New York. His orders were to

^b Frederick II. King of Prussia, on reading the account of the action, in General Lee's letter and General Clinton's dispatches, observed, that their narratives displayed more military knowledge than any which had been published during that war.

embark at Philadelphia, but by disobeying these instructions, he saved both the army and navy from imminent danger. The Americans by artificial colouring, made their partisans consider the action at Freehold court-house as a victory; but their attempt on the baggage was frustrated; and they did not venture to impede the further progress of the British general. While he was forming his embarkation at Sandy Hook, General Washington appeared in sight; and Clinton waited two days to give him battle, but in vain.

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3d July.

General Lee was sternly reprimanded by General Washington when they met in his late retreat; subsequently to the engagement, he wrote some petulant letters in vindication of his own character, which placed him at the mercy of his superior officer. Jealousy had long subsisted between these commanders. General Washington was accused, apparently without justice, of having rejoiced at, and even clandestinely prolonged the term of General Lee's captivity, and it is more than insinuated that Lee intended, in the late action, to cause the defeat of the army for the purpose of disgracing his rival. A court-martial found him guilty of disobedience of orders, of making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat, and of writing disrespectful letters to the commander-in-chief. While this sentence was under the consideration of congress, he was wounded in a duel with one of General Washington's aids-de-camp; and after the sentence was confirmed, his intemperance led him into a paper war with Mr. Drayton, a member of congress, and into scurrilous invectives against the government of America, and individuals composing it. His sentence amounted only to suspension for a year; but in consequence of his own ungoverned rashness, he never afterward attracted honourable notice; and those who but a year before had doubted of the safety of the American cause,

Disgrace of
General
Lee.

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1778.

The Toulon
squadron
sails.

9th June.

Pursued by a
British fleet.

5th July.

The French
arrive at the
Chesapeake.

11th July.

22d.

Expedition
against
Rhode-
Island.

unless upborne by him, now contentedly consigned him to oblivion, or branded his name with contempt and execration.^c

A squadron of twelve ships of the line and six frigates was equipped at Toulon, before the French announced to the British court their resolution to support the cause of America. Commanded by Count d'Estaing, this fleet passed the Straights of Gibraltar the fifteenth of May; and a British squadron of equal force, under Admiral Byron, sailed from Plymouth as soon as undoubted intelligence determined the destination of the enemy. D'Estaing, not reaching the Chesapeake till the day in which the British army embarked at Sandy Hook, pursued them to New York with an apparent design of entering the harbour. Lord Howe's force was considerably inferior to that of the French admiral; consisting only of six ships of the line, four of fifty guns, and some frigates; but being amply manned, ably officered, and disposed with judgment, they impatiently awaited the attack. D'Estaing, however, did not hazard the attempt, but with the first fair wind stood to the southward as far as the mouth of the Delaware, and steered for Rhode Island.

Preparations made in the spring for expelling the British troops from this place, had been frustrated by

^c See Memoirs of General Lee. Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 293. 297. et seq. Ramsay, vol. ii. p. 83. Lee's character is accurately described by Stedman, vol. i. p. 227. His military knowledge was great, and he had been a soldier from his infancy: he had formerly possessed the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the British service, and had served all the last war in America and Portugal with reputation. His abilities were extensive, and his knowledge improved by an intimate acquaintance with every nation in Europe. His disposition was restless and romantic, and the possession of an easy fortune enabled him to indulge it. Having received some affront from the individuals who composed the British administration, he emigrated to America, on the commencement of the disturbances, and offered his services to congress. His abilities and professional reputation being well known, his offers were accepted with joy, and he was honoured with the rank of major-general. He had been eminently useful in disciplining the American troops, and by his activity and skill had greatly contributed to the common cause. To these qualifications, however, the impartiality of history requires us to add, that he was a man of most abandoned principles; that he laughed at every attribute of the Divinity, and turned into ridicule every tenet of religion.

Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell and Major Eyre, who C H A P. XXXIV.
1778. destroyed the vessels, stores, and timber of the enemy, and rendered their artillery unserviceable; and the Americans were not now ready to co-operate with the French admiral. Lord Howe having received intelligence of his destination, appeared off Rhode Island; but the two fleets, on the point of engaging, were dispersed by a storm. Several spirited conflicts took place between single ships, in which the superiority of the British marine was illustriously maintained by Captain Dawson in the Renown, and Commodore Hotham in the Preston; but by none more conspicuously than Captain Raynor in the Isis, of fifty guns, who engaged the Cæsar of seventy-four, compelled her to seek the harbour of Boston to refit, and was prevented from effecting a capture only by the injuries sustained by his vessel in her masts and rigging. The Isis had but one man killed, and fifteen wounded; the Cæsar fifty, including the captain, the celebrated Bougainville, who lost an arm.

Meanwhile, the attack of Rhode Island was conducted by General Sullivan, at the head of ten thousand men, detached from the main army. At the approach of D'Estaing, the besieged dismantled and burnt seven British vessels, from thirty-two to sixteen guns, and concentrated the military force in the neighbourhood of Newport, which enabled Sullivan to land in the northern part of the island. The Americans formed their approaches with regularity; but the return of D'Estaing's fleet, shattered by a storm, to refit in Boston harbour, damped the spirits of the besiegers; three thousand 9th Aug.
The Ameri-
cans repulsed
at Rhode
Island.
28th. deserted, and General Sullivan, despairing of success, effected a judicious and timely retreat, checking pursuit by well-fought skirmishes, and gaining the main land in the darkness of night. His escape was truly critical; as Sir Henry Clinton was advancing with four thousand men for the relief of

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Rhode Island; and after being detained four days by contrary winds, reached the spot the very day after it was evacuated.

1778.
September.
Lord Howe
resigns the
fleet to Gambier.

The British fleet being reinforced and rendered superior to that of France; and Commodore Byron daily expected, Lord Howe returned to England, leaving the command to Admiral Gambier.

Expedition
to Buzzard's
Bay.

Sir Henry Clinton, disappointed in cutting off the retreat of the Americans, and prevented by stormy weather from completing an assault which he projected on New London, in Connecticut, detached, while he proceeded to New York, General Grey on an expedition to Buzzard's Bay. This extensive and important service was performed with surprising celerity: the troops landed at six o'clock in the evening, and re-embarked by the ensuing noon, after destroying seventy sail of ships in Acushnet River, numerous storehouses, wharfs, and two large rope-walks at Bedford and Fairhaven, and a fort mounting eleven pieces of heavy cannon, with a magazine and barracks. Proceeding likewise to an island called Martha's Vineyard, they took or burned several vessels, destroyed a salt work, disarmed the inhabitants, and levied a contribution of ten thousand sheep and three hundred oxen, with which seasonable supply the fleet returned to New York.

20th Sept.
Surprise of
Colonel Bay-
lor.

Another expedition of still more importance was undertaken against Little Egg harbour on the coast of New Jersey, a noted rendezvous for privateers, which commanded all vessels going into New York. To favour this exploit, the whole army was put in motion, and General Washington being precluded by his situation from acting with his entire force, could only send partial detachments to interrupt and confine the operations of the foragers. One of these detachments occupied the villages of Old and New Tapaan; a company of horse commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Baylor, lying in the first, and a body of militia in the other. By a circuitous rout, and cutting off the out-

posts without noise, General Grey reached Old ^{C H A P.} Tapaan while the whole party were asleep. The ^{XXXIV.} soldiers rushed in, having been deprived of their flints to prevent firing, put several to death with the bayonet, and took many prisoners; Baylor himself was slightly wounded and captured.^a Colonel Campbell was, at the same time, to have attacked the other village, but from a delay of the boats intended to transport him, the Americans were alarmed and effected a retreat.

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When the squadron reached Egg harbour, the country was alarmed, four privateers escaped, and the other vessels were conveyed up the river. Celerity being of the utmost importance, the troops were landed at Chesnut Neck, and destroyed ten prize vessels, which the enemy had previously scuttled; but prudence forbade them to prosecute an enterprize originally meditated against the Forks, where a grand deposit of prize goods was established. Re-embarking they fell down the river, and destroyed three salt works, with some houses and stores belonging to proprietors of privateers, or persons distinguished as unrelenting persecutors of the loyalists. During this interval, a detachment under Captain Ferguson, guided by the information of deserters, surprised and cut to pieces a part of the legion of the Polish Count Pulaski; few escaped, and only five were made prisoners. On the return of the squadron to New York, the British army was withdrawn from its forward position, and nothing further was undertaken in this quarter during the remainder of the winter.

5th Oct.
Attack on
Egg har-
bour.

6th.

15th.
Pulaski's le-
gion cut to
pieces.

Soon after the departure of the commissioners, Sir Henry Clinton sent a detachment of three thousand five hundred men, under Colonel Campbell, to reduce Georgia. Major-General Prevost, the commander in East Florida, had long maintained predatory hostilities against this colony, and now received orders to co-

Expedition
against
Georgia.

^a The number of American privates was 104 — 15 were killed, 13 left wounded, and 59 were taken prisoners.

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Reduction of
Savannah,and the re-
mainder of
the province.July.
Destruction
of Wyoming.

operate with Campbell, who was supported by a fleet under Admiral Parker. A few days after the arrival of the force from New York, without waiting for intelligence from General Prevost, Savannah, the capital, was attacked, and though defended by the American general Robert Howe with fifteen hundred men, and secured by many difficulties of approach, triumphantly carried, and a large booty acquired, almost without loss. Soon after this splendid action, General Prevost arrived, and assumed the chief command; the remains of the provincial army were driven across the river into South Carolina; great part of the colonists took oaths of allegiance to the King; rifle companies were formed, and prudent measures adopted for securing tranquillity and prosperity.

In other parts of the continent, the dissensions incident to civil war, aided by the native ferocity of the Indians, produced scenes of devastation and barbarity. The settlement of Wyoming was formed from the province of Connecticut, not without considerable opposition from Pennsylvania, which occasioned a civil war between the provinces. It was situated on the banks of the Susquehanna, in a most beautiful country, abounding in all the necessaries of life, and in a temperate climate. To the rage of civil claims the disputes with Great Britain superadded a different motive of contention, and the loyalists and republicans persecuted each other with unremitting rancour. Many, driven from the settlement, on suspicion of being, what their opponents termed tories, joined the Indians, and meditated dreadful revenge. A force of sixteen hundred savages, and Americans in disguise, headed by an Indian Colonel Butler, and a half Indian of extraordinary ferocity, named Brandt, lulling the fears of the inhabitants by treacherous assurances, suddenly possessed themselves of two forts, and massacred the garrisons. They next succeeded in luring the commander in chief, with four hundred men into the woods, under pretence of a parley, and slew all but seventy.

The conquerors then invested the principal fort ; C H A P. the commandant, inquiring the terms of surrender, received an answer in two words, " the hatchet," and the bloody scalps of the late victims were sent in as an insult, or to excite terror. The commandant was at last obliged to surrender at discretion : and the garrison of another fort called Wilkesborough, in hopes of obtaining mercy, yielded without resistance ; but all were involved in unsparing slaughter ; the militia were butchered with circumstances of refined cruelty ; others were shut up in houses, and burnt. Dwellings, plantations, and standing corn were indiscriminately given up to devastation ; even the brute creation were maimed and mangled, and left to expire in agonies. The fury of persecution reached its utmost height, devices of torment were exhausted, and numerous instances of parricide completed the scene of horror. ^{XXXIV.}

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If the American whigs, as they styled themselves, cannot be proved to have commenced, they were never backward in retaliating these horrors. An expedition was undertaken under another Colonel Butler, from the upper parts of Pennsylvania, against the settlements of Unadilla and Anaquago ; the inhabitants had the good fortune to escape the vengeance denounced against them as friends of the destroyers of Wyoming, but their farms, mills, and standing crops were without mercy, destroyed and laid waste. A detachment from Virginia, under Colonel Clarke, after encountering many difficulties, invaded some settlements planted by the Canadians, and compelled the inhabitants to take oaths of allegiance to the United States.

The fleet under Commodore Byron was peculiarly unfortunate : the ships were scattered by a storm, and arrived singly or in small detachments at the American ports. When the Admiral had collected and refitted his squadron, he repaired to Boston for

^{3d July.}
Disappoint-
ments of
Byron.
18th Oct.
1st Nov.

^c See Annual Register, 1779, p. 7. et seq.

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3d Nov.
D'Estaing
sails to the
West Indies.14th Sept.
Capture of
Saint Pierre
and Mique-
lon.6th Sept.
The French
take Domi-
nica.13d Nov.
Attack on
Saint Lucie.
13th Dec.Ineffectual
effort for its
relief.

the purpose of blocking up D'Estaing, but tempestuous weather drove him again to sea, and compelled him to refit at Rhode Island. D'Estaing, whose squadron was completely repaired, availed himself of this opportunity to sail for the West Indies, which at the close of the year became the scene of active enterprise.

As soon as the intelligence of D'Estaing's arrival was authenticated, Vice-admiral Montague dispatched Commodore Evans in the Romney, with a party of artillery and two hundred marines under Major Wemys, who took possession of St. Pierre and Miquelon, expelled the French, and destroyed their settlements.

The Marquis de Bouillé, Governor of Martinique, with equal facility made himself master of Dominica, but did not venture to prolong his stay in the island, or insist on such terms of capitulation as would occasion a protracted treaty, for fear of being intercepted by Admiral Barrington.

Sir Henry Clinton dispatched from New York five thousand troops under Major-General Grant, escorted by a squadron of six ships under Commodore Hotham, who speedily joined Admiral Barrington near Sainte Lucie. The celerity of General Grant's movements entitles him to the highest credit. Scarcely had the ships dropped anchor in the Cul-de-Sac, when his troops were landed, and, to the surprise of the enemy, made themselves masters of the batteries on the height which commanded it; on the following day he captured the Morne, the Carenage, and the Vigée, when D'Estaing, with twelve ships of the line, a numerous train of frigates and American armed ships, and a military force of nine thousand men made his appearance. He was, however, repulsed at the grand Cul-de-Sac by Admiral Barrington, with only three ships of the line, three of fifty guns, and some frigates, who with a skill and bravery equally admirable, effectually pro-

ected the transports and saved the provisions, ammunition, and stores of the army. D'Estaing was not more successful in an assault by land, making, jointly with De Bouillé and Count Lovendahl, three attacks on the British force, commanded by Brigadier-General Meadows, at Vigée, in which they were repulsed with the loss of one thousand three hundred men, and finally put to flight.^f After an inaction of ten days he re-embarked, and left the island to its fate; a surrender was inevitable, and the British commander granted such liberal terms as entitled him to the gratitude of the enemy.

Thus the first efforts of France, in support of her new ally, did not equal expectation; the northern provinces loudly murmured at being deserted by D'Estaing; the expedition against Rhode Island would not have been undertaken but in confidence of his co-operation; his abandonment was formally protested against, as a traitorous dereliction of the common cause, derogatory to the honour of France, contrary to the intention of His Most Christian Majesty, destructive to the welfare of the United States, and highly injurious to the alliance between the two nations.^g

The Americans soon perceived that the French, in espousing their quarrel, sought only their own interest. D'Estaing, when about to sail for the West Indies, published a proclamation to the inhabitants of Canada, exhorting them to renew their obedience to their native sovereign; and General Washington, through the ascendancy of the French party in congress, was strongly urged to undertake, in conjunction with a French force, the reduction of that dominion. The prudent general saw the

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XXXIV.
1778.

28th Dec.
It is captur-
ed by the
English.

Indignation
of the Amer-
icans
against
D'Estaing.

His pro-
clamation to
the Cana-
dians.

Washington
refuses to co-

^f In this affair the French felt their military glory tarnished; in speaking to a flag sent to them to bury their dead, they threatened to take their revenge; and added, they would send notice when next they meant to attack. General Meadows coolly sent for answer, that it would be unnecessary, as they would always find him prepared. The fifth regiment having been particularly distinguished, was ordered to wear in their hats, the white feathers left on the field by the French grenadiers.

^g Ramsay, vol. ii. p. 90.

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XXXIV.1778.
operate in
attacking
Canada.Hatred of
the Ameri-
cans toward
the French.

danger of the attempt, and instead of communicating his instructions to La Fayette, as directed by the committee for foreign affairs, wrote a long letter to congress, forcibly displaying the impolicy of the project, and urging sound political and military reasons against its adoption.^h

If the question of French or British alliance could have been fairly submitted to the people, divested of the tinsel declamations about independence, and merely viewed through the medium of comparative advantage, it can hardly be doubted that a great majority would have embraced with joy the splendid and beneficial offers of the parent-state. All the art and force of their governors were insufficient to restrain within the desired limits, the contempt and hatred of the lower class for their new allies. Riots occurred at Boston, and at Charlestown in South Carolina, between the French and American seamen; and, in fact, independently of any remains of British prejudice, no two races of men could be found less predisposed for a cordial association, than those whom artifice, intrigue, and treachery, had thus combined in one cause.

^h See Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 348.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

1778—1779.

State of the public mind. — Discordant views of Opposition. — System of Lord Chatham. — Probability of his having intended to form an administration. — Public indignation against France. — Preparations against invasion. — Keppel commands the grand fleet — captures two frigates — returns to port — is reinforced. — His engagement with D'Orvilliers. — Public discussion. — Publication by Sir Hugh Palliser. — Meeting of parliament — the late naval transactions debated. — Altercation between Keppel and Palliser. — Court-martial ordered on Keppel — he is acquitted — rejoicings and outrages of the mob — the admiral thanked by both Houses. — Palliser vacates his seat and resigns his appointments — is tried by a court-martial — and acquitted, though not without censure. — Keppel dissatisfied — resigns the command of the grand fleet. — Fox's motions against Lord Sandwich. — The Earl of Bristol's motion for his removal. — Motions respecting the navy and Greenwich Hospital. — Resignation of naval officers. — Insubordination of the navy. — Debates on the manifesto of the American commissioners. — Burgoyne's motion for papers — granted. — Similar motion by Sir William Howe — granted. — Committee formed. — Evidence examined. — Burgoyne's evidence. — Counter evidence to Sir William Howe. — Committee dissolved. — Affairs of Ireland discussed. — Partial relief granted. — Dissatisfaction of the Irish. — Non-importation agreements. — Volunteer Associations. — Motion by the Marquis of Rockingham. — Relief afforded to protestant dissenters. — Rupture with Spain. — King's message — address — amendments moved. — Militia Bill — altered by the Lords — passes in its amended state. — Bill for annulling seamen's protections. — Termination of the Session. — Rise and progress of the dispute with Spain. — Spanish Ambassador withdraws. — Manifesto. — Letters of marque issued. — French manifesto — ably answered by Gibbon. — Observations on the conduct of Spain. — Siege of Gibraltar com-

menced. — *Ineffectual attempt on Jersey. — Junction of the French and Spanish Fleets — which insult the British coasts.*

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XXXV.

1778.
State of the
public mind.

Discordant
views of
opposition.

System of
Lord Chat-
ham's adhe-
rents.

PEACE with America began now to be the object of general desire in England, but the means of attaining, and terms of securing it, occasioned great diversity of opinion. The plan of the ministry was more adapted to reason than hope; it proffered concessions which, if early held forth, would have been irresistibly inviting, but the American cause being not less strenuously espoused, after the assumption of independence than at any previous period of the contest, it could not be expected that the leaders of congress would be backward in using those arguments, and adhering to those resolutions, which were defended with so much pertinacity in the capital and senate of the mother-country. Opposition, although divided in their sentiments, united in decrying the measures of government, and distressing administration, but could not form a system of conduct which would combine them in any direct or attainable project. A party, rather active and clamorous than numerous or popular, were desirous to concede the full extent of the American requisitions, and even to solicit, with humility approaching to abjectness, a preference in the favour of the late dependencies of the kingdom. Another party adopted the opinion of Lord Chatham, and strenuously resisted the claim of independence as fatal to the welfare of Great Britain. The eloquence of that nobleman, employed occasionally for party-purposes, and procuring credence for exaggerated statements, had caused a general delusion, from which even the ministry were not exempt. The dignity of the mother-country was engaged in the American contest, but it affected her prosperity less than the public could be induced to believe. Lord Chatham deceived himself as much as others on this subject, and perhaps sacrificed his life to his patriotic feelings. Designs

were probably entertained of engaging his assistance as head of an administration, in directing the war, or giving efficiency to modes of conciliation, such an opinion, founded on the words of his last speech in parliament, was strongly maintained^a, and the measure would have been highly important in reconciling great part of the nation to the proceedings of government. The report of such an intention created lively sensations in foreign courts, and the measure was supposed sufficient for the restoration of vigour to the councils, and glory to the arms of Great Britain.^b But no operations, consistent with the opinions professed by Lord Chatham, could have reconciled the Americans, unless absolutely vanquished, to the idea of dependence.^c

The public regarded, with due indignation, the treacherous interference of France. The possibility of a strict commercial union, attended with preference, added to the desire of avoiding expence and bloodshed, and enforced by the capture of General Burgoyne's army, might have produced a more general desire to acknowledge the independence of America; but the thought of making the smallest concession to the hostile intervention, or threatened invasion of the ancient enemy of Great Britain, was contemplated with abhorrence. The menaces of France, however unlikely to be realized, occasioned vigorous exertions; the militia was embodied, camps were formed, and the country resounded with the clamour of arms.

Nor were the exertions of the admiralty deficient in furnishing means to meet the approaching exigency. When apprehensions began to be entertained

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1778.

Probability
of his form-
ing an ad-
ministra-
tion.

Indignation
against
France.

Preparations
against in-
vasion.

Keppel
commands
the grand
fleet.

^a See Lords Debates, 8th April 1778.

^b From private information.

^c On this subject I may quote the opinion of Thomas Paine, "Death," he says, "has preserved to the memory of this statesman that fame which he by living would have lost. His plans and opinions, toward the latter part of his life, would have been attended with as many evil consequences, and as much reprobated in America, as those of Lord North." Letter to the Abbé Raynal, p. 64.

CHAP. of a rupture^d, the first lord of the admiralty made
 XXXV. application to Admiral Keppel, an officer known to
 1778. be inimical to ministry, but whom a high reputation,
 the love of the sailors and the experience derived
 from forty years service, indicated as most fit to as-
 sume the command of the grand fleet ; his appoint-
 ment was frequently mentioned in terms of high ap-
 probation by members of both parties in parliament,
 and when the hostile designs of France were indis-
 putable, he was intrusted with ample discretionary
 powers for defence of the kingdom. This unlimited
 confidence was highly honourable to administration,
 as Keppel declared to the King, that he was unac-
 quainted with them as ministers ; and honourable to
 him, as he accepted the command without making
 any difficulty, or asking any favour ; serving in obe-
 dience to the King's orders, and trusting to His Ma-
 jesty's good intentions, and to his gracious support
 and protection.^e

Mar. 1778.
 His condition.

On his arrival at Portsmouth, before the King's
 message respecting France was delivered to parlia-
 ment, he found only six ships of the line fit for ser-
 vice ; during his stay, four or five more arrived, but,
 on his representation, the fleet was speedily aug-
 mented to twenty sail of the line, sufficiently equipped.^f

13th June.
 17th.
 He captures
 two frigates.

With this armament, Admiral Keppel sailed from
 St. Helens, and soon discovered two French frigates,
 La Licorne, and La Belle Poule, reconnoitring his fleet.
 Although war was not declared, yet the admiral, in
 virtue of his full powers, gave orders to chase, and
 conduct them under his stern. The Licorne sailed
 with the fleet during the night, but in the morning,
 after attempting to escape and firing a broadside,
 accompanied with a discharge of musketry into the
 American man of war, struck her colours, and was
 captured. M. de la Clocheterie, commander of La

^d In November 1776.

^e Defence of Admiral Keppel in his Trial, published by Blanchard, pp. 122, 3, 4.

^f Idem, p. 124.

Belle Poule, refused to attend and speak to the British admiral, and after an obstinate engagement, having dismasted the Arethusa, escaped by steering into a bay among the rocks, and was towed out of danger by boats from the shore. Keppel, apprized from the papers of the Licorne, and other intelligence, that anchorage was ordered in Brest harbour for thirty-two sail of the line, and three times the number of frigates, retired into Portsmouth. There was, however, reason to believe that the papers and intelligence were fabricated on purpose to deceive, nor did the admiral escape censure for disgracing the grand fleet by a retreat, without calling a council of war.

The flight of a British admiral from the coast of France, in dread of a superior squadron, excited general indignation. Some inveighed against the ministry for extreme negligence^g; others reproached the admiral^h, and the public prints even threatened him with the fate of Byng.ⁱ

At this alarming crisis the exertions of the admiralty were equal to the magnitude of impending danger. Lord Sandwich himself hastened to Portsmouth, reinforced the grand fleet with four ships of the line: Admiral Keppel put to sea, and was speedily joined by six others. The greater part of this force was in good condition and well appointed, and though deficient in the ordinary proportion of frigates, the admiral did not hesitate to sail in pursuit of the enemy, who had already left Brest.^k

He soon fell in with the French fleet, consisting of thirty-two sail of the line, with an ample complement of frigates, under the command of Count d'Orvilliers. Four days were spent in manœuvring, to counteract the disposition shewn by the enemy to evade fighting, but at length a dark squall placed the fleets in a situ-

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XXXV.
1778.

27th.
Returns to
port.

Sensation of
the public.

9th July.
Keppel puts
to sea again.

5th.
23d to 27th.
Engagement
off Ushant.

^g See Remembrancer, vol. vi. p. 233.

^h Gibbon's Posthumous Works, vol. i. p. 534.

ⁱ Trial of Admiral Keppel, p. 125.

^k Idem.

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ation which rendered the conflict inevitable. The three divisions of the British fleet were commanded by Keppel, Sir Robert Harland, and Sir Hugh Palliser: the French by D'Orvilliers, and the Ducs de Chaffault and Chartres. The engagement took place off Ushant. After several evolutions, shewing a determination in the French commander to shorten the engagement, he began the cannonade while the English fleet was at too great a distance to receive material injury, and from the position taken by the French it was necessary for the British ships in passing them to form the line, to receive the fire of their whole force. The reserved fire of the British fleet did dreadful execution; but the French having in their usual manner directed their battery against the rigging, the divisions most exposed were terribly torn and disabled. The fleets lay on different tacks, sailing in opposite directions; the engagement lasted near three hours, at the end of which they had passed each other, and the firing ceased. Admiral Keppel used his utmost endeavours to renew the combat: with some difficulty he tacked his own ship, but found that others in his division could not perform the same manœuvre; Sir Robert Harland, whose division had suffered less, obeyed without difficulty the signals to bear down into his wake; but Sir Hugh Palliser, whose ship had been very much damaged, did not join the commander-in-chief. Captain Windsor in the Fox was dispatched to direct the junction of Sir Hugh Palliser; but he, engaged in repairing his damages, could not obey the order, till night put a period to further attempts. During the darkness, the French, placing three frigates with lights to deceive the English admiral, made sail for their own coasts, and were by the next morning almost out of sight. Keppel finding pursuit vain, returned to Plymouth to refit, while D'Orvilliers unmolested gained the harbour of Brest. The English had a hundred and thirty-three slain, and three hundred and seventy-three wounded; the loss of the French

The French
retreat.Keppel re-
turns to
port.

was estimated at two thousand, including killed and wounded.

The necessary repairs being completed, both fleets again put to sea. The French pursuing their former policy of shewing an ostentatious parade but avoiding a conflict, kept aloof, abandoning their trade to the depredations of British cruisers, while the English fleets from both the Indies returned unmolested.

In describing the engagement, the French, in a style of gasconade approaching to burlesque, claimed the victory, and expressed their utter astonishment at finding themselves in the port of Brest, when they thought they had been many leagues at sea pursuing the English. Admiral Keppel, in his dispatch, extolled the conduct of his officers, particularly Sir Robert Harland and Sir Hugh Palliser; in excuse for not renewing the attack, he urged the disabled state of some of his fleet, many ships being unable to follow, when he wore to stand after the enemy; he therefore, to use his own expression, suffered the French to form their line without molestation, "thinking they meant handsomely to try their force with him the next morning."

Such an apology, for the want of complete success in an engagement which fixed the attention of all Europe, could not be satisfactory to the public, and the zeal of party displayed itself in opposite statements, reflecting on the characters of the two admirals with all the scurrility usual on such occasions. Keppel and Palliser were of nearly equal age in the service, both pupils and favourites of Sir Charles Saunders, and both indebted to his testamentary munificence. Through the intervention of Sir Hugh, the negotiation between the ministry and the admiral had been conducted; no circumstance before or speedily after the action indicated latent animosity; they returned to their stations with apparent cordiality, but the difference of their political connexions, and some transactions in the course of the day, gave probability to

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1778.
20th Aug.
to 31st Oct.
The French
avoid a new
engagement.

Accounts of
late action.

Public dis-
cussions.

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1778.
a conjecture that the general good of the service was sacrificed; an extravagant and illiberal party feud was engendered, which disgraced the naval service, and effected the ruin of a man as high in character, and able in his profession, as any officer in the navy.

Publication
by Sir Hugh
Palliser.

Although Admiral Keppel received the public approbation of the admiralty, and was graciously distinguished at court, yet the general agitation did not subside. In consequence of a scurrilous attack in a morning paper, Sir Hugh Palliser published a vindication, which Keppel, though required by letter, peremptorily refused to authenticate; and was even suspected of dictating, or at least revising, a reply.¹ Palliser charged his superior officer with want of consistency, conceiving, that, after highly approving his conduct in a public dispatch, he could not, in justice, refuse to screen his character from wanton and malignant attacks. Admiral Keppel, on the other hand, considered his official approbation a mere matter of form, calculated to prevent the bad effects of dis-union in the service, and subject to explanation from the officer by whom it was conveyed; he considered also that it related merely to the time of actual engagement, and did not account for the acts of himself or any other commander, which frustrated the well-founded national hope of a renewed conflict. When the exertions of party and public disposition to inquiry on so momentous a business, rendered immediate responsibility inevitable, Keppel refused to exculpate the vice-admiral, rather choosing to criminate him than stand in the situation of a delinquent himself.

25 Nov.
Meeting of
parliament.
King's
speech.

Such was the state of the dispute on the meeting of parliament. The King in his speech, adverted to the critical conjuncture of affairs; mentioned, with dignified and becoming indignation, the proceedings of France, his own desire of peace, and reluctant, though

¹ See these letters in the *Remembrancer*, vol. vii. p. 86; trial of Admiral Keppel, Blanchard's edition, p. 6, of the Appendix; and for the facts, see the trials of both admirals.

vigorous exertions for making reprisals and protecting commerce. He directed the attention of Parliament to the armaments of other powers, and deplored the continuance of the troubles in America, which the wisdom and temperance displayed in the late conciliatory measures, had not brought to a happy conclusion.

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1778.

In debating an amendment to the address, Mr. Fox introduced the great naval dispute, by stating the King's speech to be unfounded in fact, and its assertions false, and by alluding with severity to the disgraceful and dangerous situation of the grand fleet, when the Admiral first took the command of a force inferior by ten ships of the line to that of the enemy.

The late naval trans-
actions de-
bated.

The sea-fight off Ushant came more immediately under investigation on presenting the navy estimates, when Mr. Temple Luttrell observed, that the transactions of that day loudly demanded inquiry: Admiral Keppel could not again serve with Sir Hugh Palliser, the nation eagerly expected investigation; the two admirals were in the House, and ought to give information, as well for their own honour, as for the sake of public tranquillity.

2d Dec.
Observations
of Temple
Luttrell.

Admiral Keppel declared the glory of the British flag had not been tarnished in his hands: he impeached no man; and was persuaded that Sir Hugh Palliser had manifested no want of the requisite most essential to a British seaman — courage. He then read a paper, describing the manner of his appointment, and the nature of his situation, hoped he should not be compelled to answer particular questions relative to the action, or respecting individuals, but was ready, if duly required, to explain his own conduct either in that House or elsewhere. Nothing was left untried to bring the French to a decisive action; but unless both squadrons were equally desirous, it was impossible. He acknowledged his surprise, when an officer under his command appealed to the public by a letter in a

Of Admiral
Keppel.

CHAP. newspaper, signed with his name, when no accusation was made, and endeavoured by such means to render his superior odious and despicable. He resolved never again to set his foot on board a ship with that officer, because his conduct was fatal to all obedience and all command.

1778. Of Palliser.

Sir Hugh Palliser said, he was no less indifferent than his superior officer to inquiry; on the contrary, it was his interest to desire it. He censured the Admiral's reserve, and wished him to deliver his opinions without disguise, that a full answer might be given. If the newspaper publication was imprudent or wrong, Sir Hugh alone must bear the consequences; but he complained that while justice was rendered to his courage, he was calumniated for being deficient in other respects as an officer. An unauthenticated insinuation of neglect of duty was more injurious, because more difficult entirely to remove, than any direct crimination; and he had ineffectually sought an explanation from the commander in chief. He had reluctantly appealed to the public, and stated facts by which he would stand or fall. Sir Hugh denied that he had refused to obey signals, and treated all low insinuations and seeming tenderness, with contempt; conscious of his innocence, he feared neither reports nor assertions, neither a parliamentary inquiry nor a public trial.

Keppel's
reply.

Admiral Keppel thought the appeal to the public fully justified his resolution not again to sail with the Vice-admiral, and asserted, that the signal for coming into the Victory's wake, was flying from three o'clock in the afternoon till eight in the evening unobeyed; at the same time he did not charge the Vice-admiral with actual disobedience.

Court-martial
ordered
on Keppel.
9th Dec.

Sir Hugh Palliser immediately presented charges at the Admiralty against Admiral Keppel, upon which a court-martial was ordered. The compliance with this requisition occasioned parliamentary ani-

madversion, and a strong memorial to the King, subscribed by twelve admirals.^m

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XXXV.

1778.

30th.
Luttrell's
motion.

Mr. Temple Luttrell moved an address for the trial of Palliser, which only renewed the altercation between the two officers. Sir Hugh Palliser charged his opponent with acting in an unbecoming manner, attributed the accusation he had preferred to the necessity of vindicating his slandered character, and deplored the breach of their long intimacy. Admiral Keppel retorted with asperity, asserting that the Vice-admiral was guilty of mutiny, and thanking God, that in the approaching court-martial he was not the accuser, but the accused. The tide of popularity ran violently in favour of the Admiral; every sentence of his speech was received with applause, while Palliser was censured for conspiring with other members of administration to ruin his superior officer. In these proceedings the opposition displayed all the violence and rancour of party; no art was left unessayed to influence the public opinion in favour of Keppel, who was treated with a prostrate homage, rarely shewn to those who achieve important conquests, and was considered as a sacrifice to the ineptitude of administration. On account of his health, an act was passed for enabling the court martial to sit on shore, and the warrant for his trial was comprised in words of tenderness and respect.ⁿ

Five charges were preferred against him, summed up in a general proposition, that he lost by misconduct and neglect a glorious opportunity of rendering a most essential service to the state, and had tarnished the honour of the British navy. After sitting assiduously thirty-two days, the court-martial, by an unanimous verdict, fully and honourably acquitted the Admiral, affirming, that far from having sullied the

1779.
7th Jan. to
11th Feb.
Keppel's
trial:

and acquit-
tal.

^m See the memorial in the Remembrancer, vol. vii. p. 288. The subscribers were Lord Hawke, Admiral Moore, the Duke of Bolton; Admirals Graves, Pigot, and Harland; the Earl of Bristol; Admirals Young, Burton, and Geary; Lord Shuldharn, and Admiral Gayton.

ⁿ See Parliamentary Register, vol. xi. p. 208.

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1779.
Rejoicings
and outrages
of the mob.
11th and
12th Feb.

honour of the navy, he had acted as became a judicious, brave, and experienced officer. On this acquittal the cities of London and Westminster were illuminated two successive nights, in conformity to the injunctions of a mob, who shewed their resentment against those whom they considered as persecutors of Admiral Keppel, by acts of outrage. The house of Sir Hugh Palliser was broke open, and the furniture destroyed, and he himself was burnt in effigy. The dwellings of Lord George Germaine and Lord North were subjected to the insults of the populace; the gates of the Admiralty were thrown down, and the windows demolished; and the houses of Captain Hood and Lord Mulgrave, whose evidence gave umbrage to the friends of Keppel, were exposed to similar ravages. The city not only illuminated the Mansion-house and the Monument, but voted thanks to the Admiral, and presented him with the freedom of the city in an oak box.

12th and
16th Feb.
Keppel
thanked by
both Houses.

Both Houses of Parliament also voted thanks to the acquitted Admiral for the conduct which had occasioned his trial: in the House of Commons only one voice was raised in dissent^o; in the Lords the suffrages were unanimous.

Palliser
vacates his
seat, and
resigns his
appoint-
ments.
19th Feb.

The acquittal of Keppel seemed to fix a stigma on the character of Sir Hugh Palliser: he therefore demanded a court-martial, and with due magnanimity resigned his seat at the Admiralty board, his rank of Colonel of marines, and government of Scarborough Castle, and vacated his seat in Parliament; retaining only his appointment of Vice-admiral. This voluntary sacrifice frustrated a motion which Mr. Fox meditated for his removal.

12th April
to 5th May.
He is tried
by a court-
martial:

Admiral Keppel, although called on by the Admiralty, having refused to bring any accusation against Palliser^p, the warrant for his trial was founded on a general allegation of matters disclosed during the late

^o This dissentient was Mr. Strut. Stedman, vol. ii. p. 18.

^p See Letters on this subject. Parliamentary Register, vol. xi. p. 239.

proceedings. Keppel was, however, a principal witness: the court-martial sat one-and-twenty days, when they declared the behaviour of Palliser, in many respects, exemplary and meritorious; but "they could not help thinking it was incumbent on him to have made known to the commander-in-chief the disabled state of his own ship, which he might have done by the Fox at the time she joined him, or by other means; notwithstanding this omission, they thought him not in any other respect chargeable with misconduct or misbehaviour, and therefore acquitted him."

Such was the result of this ill-judged contest; those who in their predilection for Admiral Keppel, rashly thought that his popularity would stand on a basis as permanent as the odium against his opponent was extensive, found themselves grievously deceived; the public reflecting on all circumstances, inferred from the declaration of both parties, that "a proud day for England had been lost;" and they soon began to discover that, granting all the misconduct imputed to Sir Hugh Palliser to have been true, it was not sufficient to prevent the beneficial consequences they had a right to expect. The Admiral soon complained of the manner in which he was directed to resume the command of the fleet, was displeased with his reception at court and various other circumstances, and resigned the command. Notwithstanding the merits of his character, and the value of his past services, the public voice was never raised to require his restoration. Various intemperate motions in both houses personally respecting the two admirals, were attended with no important results; the curiosity of the people soon languished and the subject fell into complete disregard.

During this contest several motions were made in both Houses, tending to impeach the conduct of the Admiralty, and particularly of its first lord. Mr. Fox conducted these attacks in the House of Com-

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and
acquitted,
though not
without
censure.The public
zeal sub-
sides.Keppel
discon-
tent.Resigns the
grand fleet.Fox's vari-
ous motions
against Lord
Sandwich.

C H A P. mons.
xxxv. For the purpose of obtaining a decision on
1779.
22d Feb.

3d March.

mons. For the purpose of obtaining a decision on the state of the armament which sailed under Admiral Keppel, he moved for copies of all letters received by government, containing intelligence relative to the force under d'Orvilliers ; but the proposition was rejected on the usual allegation, that it was dangerous to disclose the means of information.⁹

The papers found on board the Pallas and Licorne were, however, presented to parliament : and on them Mr. Fox founded a motion, that the sending Admiral Keppel in June last, to a station off the coast of France, with a squadron of twenty ships of the line and four frigates, when a French fleet of thirty-two ships of the line, with a great number of frigates, was at Brest, and ready to put to sea, was a measure greatly hazarding the safety of the kingdom, without prospect of adequate advantage. He at the same time announced his intention of following this motion with another for removing the first lord of the Admiralty, and intimated that the facts he had stated were sufficient to warrant an impeachment.

According to the captured papers, the French government had issued orders to provide anchorage for twenty-seven sail of the line, and announced that five more would be speedily in readiness. The statements in Admiral Keppel's defence, relative to the mode of his appointment to the command, and the condition in which he found the fleet, were also read.

Admiral Keppel was required to give personal testimony on the subject, which he prefaced by a few observations on the delicacy of his situation ; he avowed the facts stated in his defence, respecting the condition of the fleet on his repairing to Portsmouth in March, but acknowledged the subsequent exertions of the admiralty board to be highly meri-

torious. He was never more distressed than when, C H A P. in consequence of the information acquired from the Pallas and Licorne, he was compelled for the first time to turn his back on the enemy.

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Lord North and Lord Mulgrave defended the conduct of government. The written documents, they said, were loose, indefinite, without date, and did not prove the existence of the ships for which they required anchorage, but rather the contrary, and Admiral Keppel's evidence was of no weight, being founded only on the information derived from these vague and deceitful papers. The testimony respecting the state of the fleet in March was extraneous, as the motion was limited to June, and official documents proved, that in July forty-eight or forty-nine sail of the line were ready for service. When Admiral Keppel sailed with twenty ships, d'Orvilliers did not venture to encounter him, but remained at Brest till the eighth of July, and notwithstanding the admiral's return, his sailing produced the advantage of facilitating the arrival of the homeward-bound fleets. The retreat was however censurable, being founded on false information, and adopted without calling a council of officers.

Admiral Keppel made several explanatory replies; he urged that the information obtained from the French frigates was proved true, by the engagement of the twenty-seventh of July; when the very ships, manned and armed as described in those papers, were opposed to his squadron. Although he had not formally called a council, yet he consulted several officers individually, who concurred in returning to port; and if he omitted that compliment to Lord Mulgrave, who was a captain in the fleet, it was only because such young men in their eagerness to fight, overlooked every consideration of prudence. The motion was negatived.

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8th March.

A similar fate attended another proposition offered by Mr. Fox, affirming, “that at the commencement of hostilities with France, the state of the navy was unequal to what the House and the nation were led to expect, as well from the declarations of ministers, as from the large grants of money, and increase of debt, and inadequate to the exigencies of so important a crisis.” In support of this motion he reviewed the conduct and declarations of ministers, inferring, as an alternative, that they were either ignorant or treacherous. “If ignorant, who would trust his dearest and nearest concerns to such men? If treacherous, where was the person mad enough to confide in them? Fortune, and not the judgment of ministers, had saved the country from destruction.”

Lord Mulgrave shewed the superior management of the navy in the present, to any previous period. He denied that fortune had been peculiarly favourable to this country; France had been saved from destruction by a succession of escapes as extraordinary as unexpected. D’Orvilliers had escaped from Keppel; D’Estaing from Lord Howe off Rhode Island, and afterwards from Byron to the West Indies. From the nature of the government, the first efforts of France were always more vigorous than ours, which the frame of our constitution rendered dilatory and languid. When that impediment was removed, we had always proved victorious. Our force would daily increase, while theirs, having attained the meridian, would decline.

Admiral Keppel was a distinguished opponent of administration; and Lord Howe supported the same cause, by affirming he was deceived into his command, and deceived while he retained it; tired and disgusted, he obtained permission to resign, and would have returned, had not the presence of a superior enemy in the American seas prevented him, till the period of Admiral Byron’s arrival. Recollecting what he felt and suffered, he would never return to a situation

which might terminate in equal ill-treatment, mortification, and disgust. Past experience had sufficiently convinced him, that besides risking his honour and professional character, he could, under the present administration, render no essential services to his country.^s

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Returning to his subject, Mr. Fox moved, that the omission to reinforce Lord Howe before June last; and the not sending a fleet to the Mediterranean, were instances of misconduct and neglect. He made these motions for the avowed purpose of involving administration in an inextricable dilemma; his last proposition stood on the supposition that the navy was inadequate; that being negatived he should pursue the line implied in the negation, though he knew it was untrue, and argued as if the navy had been adequate.

The discussion was rather personal than of public importance; Lord North attacking his opponent with sprightly raillery, on his avowed resolution to argue on a principle he knew to be false. The first proposition was negatived^t; the other withdrawn without division.

After the Easter recess, Mr. Fox made his promised motion, for dismissing Lord Sandwich from His Majesty's presence and councils for ever. In supporting it, no new argument or fact was adduced. The insufficiency of Admiral Keppel's squadron, the coolness shewn to that officer, the conspiracy of ministers against his life, and their duplicity towards him on every occasion, were unsparingly advanced. The proceedings of the fleets in all parts of the globe were reviewed, their successes undervalued, and their failures or disappointments exaggerated.

Lord Mulgrave professed astonishment, that after so many detections, Mr. Fox should persevere in his

^s The division, on a motion for the previous question, was 174 on the affirmative, to 246 on the negative.

^t 209 to 135.

CHAP. endeavours to persuade the House, that certain assertions, of which he advanced not a single proof, were facts, when most of them had been proved unfounded.

XXXV. 1779. Lord Sandwich, instead of censure, merited great praise for his official conduct. When he was raised to the chief post at the admiralty, there was not a year's timber in any of the yards, no stores in the arsenals, and the whole navy in a perishing state. By his activity and sagacity he had broken a mercantile combination; each yard now contained timber sufficient for three years' consumption; the arsenals were full of stores; the navy had a greater number of large ships than at any previous period; and was not only in a respectable, but in a flourishing state. This testimony was fully confirmed by Mr. Boyle Walsingham, and the motion was rejected. ^u

23d April.
Motion for
his removal
by the Earl
of Bristol.

A similar effort for the removal of Lord Sandwich, was made by the Earl of Bristol, who in a speech of considerable length and ability, attempted to shew that the naval service was neglected in all its departments; the national treasure shamefully squandered, and no adequate provision made for defence; the navy had rapidly decayed since the resignation of Lord Hawke, while the expence had increased beyond all precedent.

Lord Sandwich observed, that he was not solely, but jointly, responsible for the employment of the naval force; which was determined in the cabinet, and finally sanctioned by the King. He was answerable only for the use or abuse of the means placed peculiarly in his hands. He justified the increase of expence, by stating the increased magnitude of the ships in the royal navy, and accounted for temporary wants, by referring to the fires in the dock-yards at Portsmouth and Chatham. The stores were nearly six times as great as during the presidency of his predecessor; the ships at that period being built with

green timber, were mostly rotten, and unfit for service, whereas they were now constructed of the best materials, and highly equipped. The motion being negatived* ; a short protest was signed by twenty-five peers, and one of considerable length, containing a recapitulation of his reasons, by the Earl of Bristol.

Other topics, collaterally relating to the navy, were discussed in both Houses, with no less warmth and eagerness. Mr. Temple Luttrell moved, unsuccessfully, for a committee on the rapid decay of the British fleet, and to consider the means of seasoning and preparing the timber in the dock-yards. In the House of Lords, the Duke of Richmond made several motions, and examined many witnesses, tending to prove the mismanagement of Greenwich Hospital, and reflecting on the personal character of Lord Sandwich.

These repeated attacks were part of a grand system, for *clogging the wheels of government*, announced by the leaders of opposition at the beginning of the session ; the project was not confined in its effect to the legislative body ; several officers of high rank refused to serve under the present administration ; and it was reported that twenty naval captains meditated the dangerous resolution of resigning in a body ; such dispositions could not be confined to the superior class ; insubordination became truly alarming, and before the end of the session, symptoms of mutiny appeared on board the grand fleet at Torbay, and were with difficulty suppressed.

While such violent debates, attended with such alarming effects, were maintained respecting the navy, the conduct of the war in America, and other subjects connected with the army, were agitated with no less heat. The manifesto of the commissioners, on quitting that continent, gave rise to motions by Mr. Coke, and the Marquis of Rockingham, for addressing the King to express disapprobation of the threat-

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Motions
respecting
the navy and
Greenwich
Hospital.

16th Mar.

Resignations
of officers.

Insubordin-
ation in the
navy.

Debates on
the mani-
festo of the
American
commis-
sioners.
4th and 7th
Dec. 1778.

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ening paragraphs. The speeches of opposition in both Houses were rather declamatory than argumentative, and the debates extremely desultory. The ministry expressing surprise at the perverseness of their opponents, denied that the proclamation contained menaces which were not founded on the ancient usages of the war, and justified by views of self preservation. The motions were rejected by large majorities^y; thirty-one peers protested.

Parliamentary conduct of General Burgoyne.

26th Nov.

His motion for papers.

Granted.

4th Dec.
Similar motions by Sir William Howe.

General Burgoyne, by his previous conduct, as well as by his mode of opposition in parliament, fully justified the opinion of General Washington, who, in a letter to congress on the propriety of terminating his absence on parole, considered him, in his present frame of mind, not hostile to, but rather as an ally of America.^z In opposing the address, General Burgoyne deplored the condition of the country, which exhibited every symptom of immediate dissolution. Her struggles, if such in their weakness they should be called, appeared the last struggles for existence. He severely censured the conduct of administration, and trusted the time was not remote, when the voice of the country, and the light of truth, would pierce the gloomy atmosphere that enwrapt the throne, and shew things as they were. A few days afterward, he moved, that all the letters written by himself and other commanders to government, since the convention of Saratoga, should be laid before the House, which was granted without opposition.

Sir William Howe adopted a line of conduct somewhat similar, but more moderate. He complained of the disregard of his recommendations, the restraints imposed on his exertions in America, and the neglect of supplying him with instructions. He exculpated from these censures Lord North, but laid accumulated blame on Lord George Germaine, under whose conduct he was sure the war would never be

^y In the House of Commons, 209 to 122. In the House of Lords, 71 to 37.

^z See Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 383.

advantageously conducted. He also obtained, by C H A P.
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1779. a motion, copies of all letters between him and the secretary of state for America, during the period of his command.

The House being formed into a committee on the American war, Sir William Howe entered into a long defence, tracing every important step he had taken, and endeavouring to shew that he had never been remiss in his endeavours, rarely wrong in his judgment; and if, on some occasions, he had failed to realise the sanguine hopes of the country, he had executed as much as could be reasonably expected; and had been restrained by political reasons, which he did not think proper to disclose, from prosecuting some of his victories to the greatest advantage. In conclusion, he proposed to examine witnesses in support of his observations.

Although the ministry had not objected to the delicacy of sentiment, which induced the General to press on the House a vindication of his conduct, they could not regard with indifference an attempt to establish, by evidence, facts gratuitously stated; facts, which if designed to exculpate the General, were only heard through complaisance, as no criminatory motion or proceeding existed; or if intended to subject the ministry to censure, ought to be accompanied by a specific charge. The motion for receiving evidence, after many efforts at amendment, was negatived; but as the committee was not formally dissolved, and great obloquy was thrown on administration for appearing to evade inquiry, it was afterward ad May. suffered to pass.

The examinations were designed not merely to elucidate the conduct of General Howe, but to establish enlarged principles relative to the future events of the war. They tended to prove that the force employed in America, was at no time adequate to the subjugation of the country; nor, indeed, could any other force prove successful while the inhabitants

Evidence
examined.

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averse from the British government. From this circumstance, and the nature of the country, covered with wood, and intersected with ravines, the troops could not act at any considerable distance from the fleet, and their operations were accordingly slow, and subject to interruption. General Howe's conduct was strenuously defended; and several officers, particularly Lord Cornwallis and General Grey, spoke in the highest terms of the personal affection with which he was regarded by the whole army.

13th May.
Counter-
evidence
ordered.

From the unexpected latitude which the examinations had assumed, the ministry found themselves under the necessity of appealing to counter-evidence to disprove some of the statements. Accordingly, Mr. de Grey moved for a summons directing the attendance of ten witnesses, which occasioned violent exclamations on the part of opposition. Mr. Burke decried the proceeding as irregular and unfair; ministers, he said, affected to applaud the military conduct of Sir William Howe, and now, by a side-wind, in a late stage of the examination, endeavoured to invalidate and defeat evidence which they could not pretend to disbelieve. Against this mode of argument the former declarations of the same party were successfully urged; they had begged only for inquiry; if the inquiry proved merely *ex parte*, that would be the fault of administration, who might call evidence in their own defence, if they deemed it necessary; but now, these improper objections were raised. The American secretary declared he had no disposition to accuse General Howe; he principally desired evidence to disprove the statement, that America was almost unanimous in resisting the claims of Great Britain. Mr. Fox, triumphing in the apparent strength of the testimony already given, contemptuously recommended that no opposition should be made to the production of further information, from every quarter, and through every channel; but Mr. Burke would not acquiesce, and when the names of

parties intended for examination were read, reviled them as refugees, and custom-house officers. The motion was, however, agreed to without a division.

During this interval, General Burgoyne proceeded in the examination of his witnesses; they proved that, in his unfortunate expedition, he had acted with uniform bravery and skill, and endeared himself to his whole army. These facts were never denied, and therefore no endeavour was made to impeach them.

The counter-evidence on Sir William Howe's inquiry, asserted, that the Americans were by no means unanimous in their opposition to the British government, and nothing but egregious neglect in the commander in chief, could have enabled congress to retain a single adherent. The force placed at his disposal was fully sufficient to effect the real purpose of his mission, which was not the conquest of America, but the grant of protection to those who would join the British force; and, under such circumstances, the nature of the country was not less favourable to the English than to the American general. Mr. Joseph Galloway², one of the two witnesses examined, was extremely severe in his censures of Sir William Howe.

The General expressed great disapprobation at the effect of this testimony, which, by giving undue weight to the opinions of individuals, was calculated to injure his character with the public; he therefore required permission to call new evidence. This proposition was strongly resisted, the intent of the examination being not to affect the General, whom no man had accused, but to clear the conduct of administration, which he had loudly censured. At his request, however, Mr. Galloway was directed to attend again for cross-examination; but on the day appointed, the General was not in the House, and, after waiting some time, Mr. R. Whitworth moved to adjourn.

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18th May.
to 1st June.
Burgoyne's
evidence ex-
amined.5th June.
Counter-
evidence re-
specting Sir
William
Howe.24th June
Objections.

29th June.

² Late speaker of the Pennsylvanian assembly, and author of several able and well-written pamphlets on the subject of the American war.

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Committee
dissolved.
20th.

Both parties were now wearied and disgusted ; the opposition, the first movers in the business, were convinced it could not tend to the advantage they expected, and administration having only meant to exculpate themselves, had no longer any object to pursue ; the motion was therefore carried without debate ; and thus the committee expired, without forming any resolution. The next day General Howe complained of surprise ; he attended the House, he said, at four o'clock, not expecting the dissolution of the committee at so early an hour ; he had no intention of putting further questions to Mr. Galloway, but meant to have pressed his former request for the examination of new witnesses. A debate of some acrimony ensued, in consequence of a peremptory demand, from both Sir William and Lord Howe, of an express statement, whether the conduct of the General furnished cause of crimination : the ministers refused a reply, but did not disavow the speech of Earl Nugent, who declared that no charge was ever intended ; the General and his brother had the probation of their Sovereign ; no confidence was withdrawn, and, if offered, their services would be accepted.

16th Déc.
1778.
Affairs of
Ireland dis-
cussed.

An object of consideration, no less important and embarrassing, presented itself to the consideration of parliament, when Earl Nugent, early in the session, drew a deplorable picture of the calamities and distresses of the lower class of people in Ireland, and Lord Newhaven gave notice of his intention to move for a bill, allowing a general exportation from that country of all merchandizes except woollens. The prohibition of commerce with America, he said, had driven the manufacturers and labourers to unexampled distress, lowered the value of lands, prevented the payment of rents, and endangered the existence of the sister kingdom.

19th Jan.

Pursuing his original plan, Earl Nugent gave notice of his intention to move for the establishment

of a cotton manufactory in Ireland, with a power of c h a p. exporting to Great Britain, and an open trade with America, the West India Islands, and Africa. A committee was afterwards formed on the motion of Lord Newhaven, for taking into consideration the acts of parliament relating to the importation of sugars to Ireland; but no effectual progress was made. The intended relief was counteracted by the opposition of many mercantile and manufacturing towns, and eventually amounted only to a pecuniary grant in consequence of a royal message, and two acts for encouraging the growth of tobacco and hemp, and the manufacture of linen.

The merchants of Dublin expressed indignation at "the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition of self-interested people in Great Britain, to the encouragement of their commerce. Such opposition originated in avarice and ingratitude; and they resolved, neither directly nor indirectly, to import or use any British goods, which could be produced or manufactured in Ireland, till an enlightened and just policy should appear to actuate those who had taken so active a part in opposing the regulations in favour of the trade of Ireland." This example was followed by several counties and towns, particularly Cork, Kilkenny, Wicklow, and Roscommon.

A more effective measure than the vote of an assembly at Dublin, was the establishment of armed corps of volunteers, which now began to prevail throughout the country. A rumour of French invasion, and the diminution of the national force by drafts for American service, furnished a motive for these associations, which were countenanced by the most eminent characters, and armed, disciplined, and accoutred at their own expense. Government knew not how to regulate the conduct of the associated bodies, but surveyed them with alarm, as a new power introduced into a community already sufficiently difficult to govern.

18th.
Partial relief granted.

16th Apr.
Dissatisfaction of the Irish.

Non-importation agreement.

Volunteer associations.

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11th May.
The Marquis
of Rocking-
ham's mo-
tion respect-
ing Ireland.

27th May,
and 2d June.

10th Mar.
Relief af-
forded to
Protestant
dissenters.
28th Apr.

When the House of Commons had ceased to discuss the affairs of Ireland, the Marquis of Rockingham introduced the subject in the Lords, by moving an address for such documents relative to the trade of Ireland, as would enable the national wisdom to pursue effectual measures for promoting the common strength, wealth, and commerce of both kingdoms. He reviewed, with general disapprobation, the conduct of the revenue, trade, and government, both civil and military, since 1755, and inveighed against the ministry for suffering the late military associations; the necessity for them should have been prevented, or the people should have been legally commissioned and enabled to take arms. Such associations would probably repel invasion, but the same spirit might be exerted in resisting oppression and injustice. The address was agreed to, but although two subsequent debates arose, no effectual measure was adopted; the ministry, however, entered into an implied agreement, to prepare, during the recess, a satisfactory plan of relief.

A bill brought into the House of Commons by Mr. Frederick Montague, in consequence of a motion by Sir Henry Houghton, for further relief of Protestant dissenting ministers and school-masters, passed after several debates, in which the nature of religious liberty, and principles of toleration, were amply discussed. The question was fairly and ably argued, and extremes were avoided in the decision, though advanced in debate. Mr. Wilkes reprobated every species of religious restraint, and Mr. Dunning argued against the only restriction the bill yet contained, that of requiring persons who preached in public, or undertook the education of youth, to declare their belief in the doctrines of Christianity, as established by the Holy Scriptures. He contended that even such a test might be productive of evil; for those who could not sign it would be liable to the penal statutes still in force; and if one single prosecution arose, instead of being a bill for relief, it would be an act of oppression. Sir Wil-

liam Bagot, Sir Roger Newdigate, and a few others, opposed the general principle of the bill, as injurious to the established religion ; Lord North commended its tolerating principle, as perfectly consistent with the spirit of the times and the disposition of the whole bench of Bishops ; the test proposed was such as no Christian and Protestant dissenter could refuse to sign. As to Deists, and persons denying the Trinity, or professing other singular religious opinions, not being either Christians or Protestants, the bill had nothing to do with them ; but if the state could not regulate, it had a right to guard against authorizing men to teach such notions. No report is preserved of any debate in the House of Lords.

At a late period of the session, when no further business was expected, Lord North informed the House of Commons, that Count d'Almadovar, the Spanish ambassador, had withdrawn from London, after delivering to the secretary of state a manifesto, which, with a message from the King, would be presented to parliament on the morrow. This information occasioned several animated philippics from opposition, decrying the ignorance and delusion of ministers, and threatening exemplary punishment. A motion by Mr. Burke for a committee on the state of the nation was, however, at the instance of his own friends, withdrawn.

The King's message declared an uniform and sincere desire to cultivate peace and friendly intercourse with the court of Spain ; good faith, honour, and justice alone had guided his conduct, and he saw with surprise the grievances alleged in justification of intended hostility, all which were misrepresented, or had never before been imparted. He relied therefore on the zeal and spirit of parliament, for means to defeat the enterprizes of his enemies against the honour of his crown, and the rights and interests of the nation.

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16th June.
Rupture
with Spain
announced.

17th June.
King's mes-
sage.

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Addresses.

Amend-
ments
moved.

In the House of Commons the address was unanimously acceded to, but Lord John Cavendish ineffectually moved a second address, requiring the King to collect his fleets and armies, and to exert the whole force of the kingdom against the House of Bourbon^b.

In the upper house, the Earl of Abingdon declared he would never assent to any such address; but would, though single, divided the House, till the grievances of the people were redressed by the expulsion of the ministers, who had wantonly, openly, and in defiance of the majesty of the people of England, not only broken down the fences of the constitution, but left the country exposed to ravage, and threatened with destruction. He moved an amendment, praying for a change of system, which was necessary to unite the people, and preserve the empire.

Although the Duke of Richmond requested him to withdraw this motion, Lord Abingdon persisted in taking the sense of the House, by whom it was rejected^c. The Duke then proposed a second amendment, not materially different in substance, though better arranged, which he supported by a long speech, decrying the conduct of administration, as tending to create civil war in every part of the British dominions. He was ably sustained by Lord Shelburne. The ministry did not enter into the wide field of argument to which they were challenged, but contented themselves with answering a few personal reflections, and with brief remarks, on the occasion of the message. The Duke, in reply, declared the real aim of his amendment to be the withdrawing of the troops from America, for the protection of Great Britain. His motion was lost^d, but a long protest was subscribed by twenty peers.

Protest.

21st June.
Militia bill.

One of the measures proposed by administration, for efficacious defence in the approaching crisis, was a

^b Lost by 156 to 60.

^c 62 to 28.

^d 57 to 32.

bill for increasing the militia to a number not exceeding its present amount doubled, and enabling individuals to raise loyal corps. This bill was combated in all its stages, as indicative of national weakness, oppressive to the country, and impracticable. The minister declared it was not his wish to pursue the measure with obstinacy; but submitted it to the judgment of the House. During the progress of the bill, a motion was made by Sir Grey Cooper, for limiting the number of militia incorporated by ballot, to fifteen thousand four hundred and twenty-four; and the compliance of the minister, was only prevented by the remonstrances of his friends, that such a dereliction of his original plan, would be a triumph to his opponents, already too apt to stigmatize his want of firmness. The bill passed the House of Commons, according to the original project, but in the House of Lords, the clause enabling the King to double the militia, was rejected by a considerable majority.^e

On its being returned in this state to the House of Commons, the minister was sharply upbraided for the want of unanimity in the cabinet, while he so constantly recommended unanimity to the House. He defended himself with great ability, observing, that as minister of the House of Commons, he had not thought it necessary, before he introduced the measure, to consult those, who not being representatives of the people, had no constituents to support the burthen; but when the members of the Upper House, who were lords lieutenants of counties, took the proposition into their consideration, they rejected it as impracticable. Although he did not agree in their judgment, he could not controul it; his own experience in the county where he was lord lieutenant, induced him to recommend the measure; but his experience could not regulate the opinions of the peers. What remained of the bill was highly

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30th June.
Altered by
the Lords.

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Passes in its
amended
state.

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important to the public service, and waving every consideration of pride, he was willing to accept the power of augmenting the national force by volunteer corps, even as “crumbs falling from the table of their lordships.”

The House was twice divided, in consequence of attempts to reject the bill, as a money-bill unconstitutionally amended by the Lords; but these efforts were ineffectual.^f

23d June.
Bill for an-
nulling pro-
tections to
seamen.

At a late hour in the night, after the debate on the militia, Mr. Wedderburne moved to bring in a bill for removing difficulties in manning the navy, by resuming protections granted to certain descriptions of seamen, watermen and their apprentices, and by depriving of their right to a habeas corpus, all persons of those classes who had been impressed since the day when the royal message respecting Spain was delivered to the House. His motive for making this motion at so late an hour, was, that the effect might not be prevented by disclosure, and that an ample supply of seamen might, without impediment, be obtained for the grand fleet. The principle of the bill did not escape severe animadversion, as a violation of those rights of protection, which were not less sacred, defined and inviolate, than those by which life and property were enjoyed; and the manner and time of introducing the measure were inveighed against as pitiful, sneaking and treacherous, like a midnight irruption into a dwelling-house for the purpose of plunder, but with a determination to commit murder rather than abandon the spoil. The bill, however, passed both Houses, after violent debates; a protest was entered against the refusal to adopt some proposed amendments, signed by fourteen, and another against the general principles of the act, signed by four peers.

29th June.
Protests.

3d July
Termination
of the ses-
sion.

The session was concluded by a speech from the throne, thanking parliament for their zeal in support

^f The numbers were, on the first 63 to 45: on the second 51 to 23.

of the war, and their attention to Ireland; the King's ^{CHAP.} paternal affection for all his people, making him ^{xxxv.} singularly anxious for the happiness and prosperity of every part of his dominions. The events of the war had not afforded France any just cause to triumph in the consequences of perfidy; and whatever colour Spain might endeavour to put on her proceedings, His Majesty was conscious of having no cause for self-reproach; he exulted in the demonstrations of loyalty and affection displayed in parliament, and considered it a happy omen of success in arms, that the increase of difficulties served only to augment the courage and constancy of the nation.

From the moment that hostilities with France became apparent, many politicians sanguinely predicted that Spain would interfere. On general principles, this supposition was far from self-evident, and the particular circumstances of the case warranted a contrary conclusion. If the probability of war was sanctioned by the family compact, and the natural disposition of Spain to concur in humbling the pride and diminishing the prosperity of Great Britain, the nature of the American contest afforded too many alarming topics of application, to permit the supposition that Spain would engage in the cause.

The treaty between France and America was so suddenly concluded, that Spain could not be consulted, and therefore, at the beginning of hostilities, the court of Madrid, without affecting to justify France, was anxious to restore tranquillity, and voluntarily offered her mediation. The Marquis ^{1778.} d'Almadovar, who delivered his credentials as ambassador to the court of London after the capture of the French frigate by Admiral Keppel, gave the strongest assurances of His Catholic Majesty's desire to promote harmony, and cement the union between Great Britain and Spain by all proper ties. The ambassador observed, that he had received his instructions anterior to the late transactions of the British fleet, but had no reason to believe that event would

Rise and
progress of
the dispute
with Spain.

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CHAP. change the disposition of his court. France, nevertheless, consistently with her usual policy, assiduously circulated reports that Spain would accede to the treaty with America, and had authorised M. D'Aranda to complete the transaction.^g

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At several conferences with the secretary of state, the Spanish ambassador urged the solicitude of his royal master to act as mediator between Great Britain and France, and pressed for some proposal from the British court, insinuating, that the intended good offices were neglected. Lord Weymouth acquitted himself of this charge, by observing, that Spain had not proposed to mediate, but merely professed an inclination to receive an application from either power. Although France had offered an unexpiated insult to Great Britain, still His Majesty was earnestly desirous of peace, but could not, consistently with the dignity of his crown, solicit the interference of a foreign court, till the views and intentions of France, the aggressor, were known. These conversations were far from impressing a notion that Spain sought a quarrel, on the contrary, one of the subjects discussed was the means of forming a more intimate commercial connection.^h

25th Sept.

27th Oct.

In compliance with the intimation of Lord Weymouth, a paper was delivered on the part of His Catholic Majesty, offering to commence a negotiation, wherein the dignity of neither crown should seem affected by making the first advance, and therefore proposed that each court should remit to Madrid a state of its views and expectations, the King of Spain proposing to communicate to each the proposition of the other. The answer of the British court was comprised in a single article: " Whenever France should withdraw all assistance and support from America, notwithstanding the unprovoked aggression, the King

^g Letter from Lord Weymouth to Lord Grantham, 21st July 1778.

^h Letter from Lord Weymouth to Lord Grantham, 13th September 1778.

would be ready to restore peace and re-establish amity and harmony." France demanded that the King should acknowledge the absolute independence of the thirteen provinces, cede all their territories in his possession, and withdraw all his forces. When these preliminaries were complied with, France proposed to settle and explain various points in former treaties, the previous discussion of which would be difficult and useless.

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In imparting this proposal, the King of Spain ^{16th Nov.} hoped, notwithstanding the wide difference between the sentiments of Great Britain and France, to find means of adjustment, and in a subsequent dispatch requested a revision of the article proposed by the British court, and the adoption of some expedient or temperament, more adapted to reconciliation. This the British ministry unanimously rejected. France, ^{5th Dec.} they observed, manifested no desire of peace, but, by insisting on the independence of America, sought ^{29th Dec.} only to perfect the blow she had attempted to strike.

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Both courts persisting in their original sentiments, the King of Spain, as an accommodating expedient, proposed three plans: First, a truce with the colonies for twenty-five or thirty years, during which a peace might be negotiated, and in the mean time the points in dispute between the courts of London and Versailles might also be adjusted. Secondly, a truce with France, including the colonies. Thirdly, an indefinite truce with the colonies, and France, which yet should not terminate without a year's previous notice, during which the plenipotentiaries of the three parties might meet in congress, with a fourth from the court of Madrid to mediate. Such a convention might be signed by the American deputies at Paris *sub spe rati*, the French court employ its good offices to obtain the ratification; and the crowns of Spain and France guarantee the stipulations. In the mean time the colonies were to trade freely with all the world, and maintain independence *de facto*, such as it was sup-

CHAP. posed the King's commissioners had power to offer
XXXV. them ; the British forces were to be withdrawn, or
1779. at least much reduced, and their communications
with the country regulated.

16th Mar.

In a long and well composed answer to this proposition, the British ministry reviewed the whole conduct and pretensions of France, exposed the perfidy which dictated an interference in the contest, the fallacy of the pretences advanced during the negotiation, and the futility of their arguments when they alleged their own hostilities as the source of their apprehensions, and their apprehensions as the source of their hostilities. Considering the plans proposed by Spain as shortly and generally stated, according to the nature of an overture, they were analysed with freedom, and the consequences accurately deduced. The grant of a truce for five-and-twenty or thirty years, or for an indefinite term, not to be determined without a year's notice, accompanied with an evacuation of the provinces (for nothing less could meet the terms proposed) and a free trade, would, in fact, be so effectual a concession of independence, that nothing could prevent the Americans from attaining that state, should the treaty terminate unfavourably. It would be such a dereliction of all right of government, such a sanction of all past proceedings in the colonies, as would reduce His Majesty's faithful subjects to the condition of rebels, and prevent any interference on their behalf. The degradation of Great Britain would also be complete, for the King must treat with France for inducing the colonies to accede ; the American deputies might sign the treaty *sub spe rati*, but the good offices of France must be exerted to procure the ratification. After renouncing, or rather transferring to the congress and France, for so long a time, the allegiance and loyalty of his faithful subjects, His Majesty was to treat with congress for the surrender of their public character and government, and with France for her concurrence in such a measure, and at

the same time for her peculiar interests, consisting in unspecified demands. These, whatever they might be, must doubtless be adjusted before France would concur in dissolving those states with whom she had contracted alliance and amity, for the purpose of obtaining her own points ; but as she neither specified her own objects, nor the endeavours she would use to re-establish the British constitution in America, the acceptance of such a truce could only be viewed as an absolute, if not a distinct cession of all rights of the British crown in the thirteen colonies, under the additional disadvantage of making it to the French, rather than to the Americans themselves.

To remove all doubts from the mind of the King of Spain respecting the points on which he might employ his good offices, the British ministry suggested that France should propose her grievances, jealousies, or demands. Great Britain would then give an answer equally explicit ; or, a truce of sufficient duration might be made between Great Britain and France, for the adjustment of their rival pretensions by the good offices of His Catholic Majesty. And to obviate every pretence for continuing hostilities on the side of North America, the insurgents might also propose their grievances, and the terms of security and precaution on which legal government might be restored. Or a truce might also take place in North America, that is, a real truce, an actual suspension of hostilities, during which the liberty and property of all orders and descriptions of men might be restored and secured, and every violence on their persons and estates wholly intermitted on each side. During such truces, the French ministers would be at liberty to treat for their own separate concerns, without incurring unavoidable suspicions, by mixing their own peculiar advantages with the supposed interests of those pretended allies, and His Majesty might settle the government of his own dominions without the appearance of receiving terms from an enemy.

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3d April.

On the basis of this proposition, the Spanish minister, M. de Florida Blanca, suggested, as the best means of accommodation, a suspension of arms, and disarmament, the meeting of plenipotentiaries at Madrid for the adjustment of peace, and settlement of a definitive treaty, plan of restitutions and arrangement of all causes of complaint between Great Britain and France, under the mediation of Spain. A reciprocal disarmament and suspension of hostilities was also to be separately granted to America through the same mediation, and American commissioners admitted to the negotiation ; the truce was not to terminate till after a year's notice.

4th May.

This plan was delivered as the ultimatum of Spain ; but as it was founded on the principles which had been disclaimed, the British court declared it inadmissible ; acknowledging, at the same time, the benevolence of the King of Spain's interposition, and hoping, that should France be disposed to offer less imperious and unequal terms, the same good offices would be renewed.

4th May.

In a private letter, which accompanied the above answer, Lord Weymouth stated to the British ambassador his alarms at the articles of the ultimatum, which indicated the prevalence of French influence in the councils of Spain. He had hitherto suppressed the suspicions which many circumstances tended to excite, but a full explanation was now necessary. Did Spain wish and insist on the dismemberment of Great Britain so earnestly, as to engage in war for the purpose of effecting it ? or, if not, what means had the proposal left for averting the event ?

29th May.

The behaviour of M. D'Almadovar did not justify the apprehensions disclosed in this dispatch ; he expressed to the secretary of state the regret of the Catholic King in withdrawing his offered mediation, from a conviction that it could be attended with no effect ; but nothing transpired which shewed a propensity to irritation on either side. At a subsequent in-

terview, the Spanish ambassador renewed these expressions, lamented that all the propositions of Spain were refused, and no others substituted; and complained of the words "imperious and unequal terms," in the dispatch of the fourth of May, as harsh and unnecessary. The explanation on all these points was full and satisfactory: the King had been precluded from offering terms of pacification, because the propositions made by France tended merely to secure the independence of the colonies by direct means, or the intermediate effect of a truce. The words which were complained of obviously referred to France only, and not, in the most distant manner, to Spain. By M. d'Almadovar's desire, Lord Grantham was directed to convey, through M. de Florida Blanca, to the King of Spain, the ardent wish of His Britannic Majesty for the re-establishment of peace, whenever it could be effected consistently with the regards due to his crown and people; his sincere sense of the friendly part taken by His Catholic Majesty, and his regret at the temporary failure of his efforts. If France had made demands immediately connected with her own interest, and those demands had been countenanced by the wishes of Spain, the King would have shewn, by his compliance, his desire of peace and regard for so respectable an interference, but the communications of the French court, having been confined to the interests of the rebellious colonies, with whom, in justice, they ought not to have had any connection, the King could not renew pacific propositions: yet if any were made by His Catholic Majesty, they would be received with the utmost regard, and examined with candour and attention. The re-establishment of peace, however desirable in itself, would receive additional value if effected by the mediation of Spain, as it would tend more closely to unite the two crowns, and produce advantages to both.¹

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¹ For all these facts I have consulted the original correspondence between the secretary of state and Lord Grantham.

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16th June.
Spanish em-
bassador
withdraws.

His letter.

Spanish
manifesto.

Before these obliging expressions could reach the court for which they were intended, and before any previous intimation could be received from any quarter, M. d'Almadovar received his instructions to quit London without taking leave, and delivered the paper which accompanied the King's message to parliament. It complained of the rejection of the Catholic King's benevolent interference, the violences committed on his dominions in the course of the war, and the neglect of his numerous applications for redress, and announced his resolution to seek reparation by the means with which God had intrusted him.

Beside this angry paper and two royal schedules to his own subjects, the Spanish Monarch published a manifesto, long, desultory and feeble, complaining of the conduct of Britain in innumerable instances since the conclusion of peace. Violations of territory in the bay of Honduras, exciting the Indians to attack Spain, and refusal of redress on repeated applications, formed the leading subjects of crimination. Naval outrages were enumerated with a degree of affected precision, and denounced with a pompous vehemence which must have been ridiculous to all Europe. The insults offered by the British navy to the Spanish navigation and trade, from 1776 to the beginning of 1779, were "already eighty-six in number, including prizes taken by unjust practices, piracy, and robberies of various effects out of the vessels, attacks made by gun-firing, and other incredible violences: since that period, other injuries of the same kind had been added, sufficient to justify the assertion that the grievances of the late years did not fall much short of a hundred." England was also accused of endeavouring to effect a re-union with the American colonies, in order to arm them against the House of Bourbon; the whole history of the negotiation was perverted and misrepresented in many essential particulars, and it was asserted that while the boon of American independence was refused on the intercession of Spain, Eng-

lish emissaries were clandestinely proposing terms still more liberal to Dr. Franklin at Paris. The King of Spain therefore announced the necessity of curtailing and destroying the arbitrary proceedings and maxims of the English marine; in the attainment of which end all other maritime powers, and even all nations, were become highly interested.

To these empty publications, the court of Great Britain replied, by ordering letters of marque and reprisal against Spanish property and by a judicious and temperate letter from Lord Weymouth to the Spanish ambassador. France also published a long historical manifesto, displaying the motives and conduct of the Most Christian King toward England, which was artfully drawn up, and well calculated to deceive, but was answered in an eloquent justificatory memorial, the production of the celebrated Gibbon.^k

Thus was Spain, to use the expression, enlisted in the cause of France. Beside the general absence of any sufficient ground of provocation^l, the ordinary views of policy offered many strong reasons against a rupture with Great Britain. The good sense of the Emperor had pointed out the impropriety of a sovereign, arming in behalf of rebels; and Spain had motives of interest, far more cogent, for adopting similar sentiments. A bigotted attachment to the Catholic religion, and the vicinity of her American possessions to the English colonies, presented powerful objections against forming an alliance with, or in favour of,

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18th June.
Letters of
marque is-
sued.

13th July.
Lord Wey-
mouth's
letter.

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manifesto.

Observa-
tions on the
conduct of
Spain.

^k See all these last-mentioned pieces in the Annual Register for 1779, article State Papers. Gibbon's publication, though not official, called forth great exertions, both in France and among the adherents of America, to furnish an adequate reply. Some anonymous reflections were published; some, avowed by the well known Baron de Beaumarchais and others, were published by authority. See Remembrancer, vol. ix. p. 1. 83. 201. vol. x. p. 116.

^l It is almost impossible, that in the state of British and Spanish possessions in different parts of the world, cause of complaint should not arise on both sides. A motion was made and a petition offered to the English parliament, the 25th of February 1777, and in a conversation between Lord Grantham and M. de Florida Blanca in 1778, some of the complaints adverted to in the manifesto were discussed, but the Spanish minister did not express any impatience on the subject, nor any doubt of fair and equitable redress. Letter from Lord Grantham to Lord Weymouth, 23d November 1778.

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America. No sufficient inducement could be advanced to counterbalance these arguments; the Spaniards had no view of extending commerce, and their friendly disposition toward France, might have been safely exerted in clandestine aids, in supplies of money, and agitating the English nation, by continual reports of preparation and specious offers of mediatory interference.

France had, with her usual dexterity, urged her ally to decide in favour of hostilities; and before the resolution of Spain was formed, boasted of her success in such a manner as to embarrass the cabinet of Madrid, whose final determination was not marked with the promptitude of vigour, but the rashness of fear, flying into the arms of danger to escape the horrors of doubt. Five days before he delivered his orders to quit the British court, the Count d'Almadovar had not the slightest suspicion that his diplomatic mission was likely to terminate; and while the French ambassador at Vienna loudly boasted the success of his court, in engaging a new enemy against Great Britain, the Spanish ambassador unreservedly declared he had not received any direct communication on the subject.^m

Siege of
Gibraltar
commenced.
24th June.

Probably France lured Spain on this occasion by the prospect of recovering Gibraltar, and military operations were accordingly commenced by the siege of this fortress. Orders were dispatched for discontinuing all commerce with the garrison, and an attempt was made to impede supplies from the coast of Africa, by a treaty with the Emperor of Morocco, for farming the ports of Tetuan, Tangier, and Larache.

16th June.

Soon after the declaration of hostilities, the Spaniards formed a naval blockade, and commenced approaches by land. The garrison amounted to near six thousand men, in good health, full of vigour, and not deficient in provisions; they were commanded by the brave General Elliot, who justified the confidence

^m Letter from Sir Robert Murray Keith to Lord Weymouth, 23d June 1779.

of the troops, by a regular performance of his duties, by a prudence and penetration, which overlooked no circumstance, however minute, tending to the welfare and safety of his troops, and by a firmness of mind which rendered obedience easy, and command respectable.ⁿ

No martial enterprize of the French in Europe, no appearance of efficient preparation, served to encourage the Spaniards in their hostile determination. An ill digested and inefficient attack on Jersey was easily repelled ; and the failure of the attempt, only exposed to ridicule the name of the projector, who was called the Prince de Nassau Siegen, and laid a disputable claim to descent from the illustrious house of Nassau.

Before the declaration of war with Spain, the French fleet, under D'Orvilliers, consisting of twenty-eight sail, but extremely defective in preparation, gained, in the absence of the British squadron, the Spanish coast, and after failing in an attempt to intercept a force under Admiral Darby, effected a junction with the armament of Spain.

The spirit of the English nation was not daunted by the strong combination of enemies ; a Spanish war was never unpopular, and the spirit of enterprise was universally prevalent. Individuals and public bodies entered into large subscriptions for raising troops, giving bounties to seamen, equipping privateers, and other patriotic purposes ; volunteer associations were formed to repel invasion, and the East India Company, with becoming liberality, granted bounties for six thousand seamen, and undertook to build and equip three new ships, of seventy-four guns, for the royal navy.

But all these exertions were insufficient to give the English fleet a superiority over the united squadrons of the enemy : Sir Charles Hardy, who succeeded

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Ineffectual
attempt on
Jersey.

May 1st.

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Junction of
the French
and Spanish
fleets.

Exertions in
England.

The com-
bined fleet
insult the
British coast.

ⁿ In all details respecting the siege of Gibraltar, I have relied on the Historical Journal of Captain John Drinkwater.

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Admiral Keppel in the command, cruized in the channel during the whole summer, with about thirty-eight sail of the line. The enemy insulted the channel with an irresistible force, shewed themselves before Plymouth, where they created general alarm, and captured the Ardent of sixty-four guns, whose commander mistook the united fleet for that of the British Admiral. Although terror and agitation prevailed in England, the enemy undertook no important enterprize; jealousy prevailed between the commanders of the combined fleet, sickness committed dreadful ravages on the crews; and at an early period of the year, they retired into Brest, leaving the British trade almost unmolested.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

1779.

State of the French and English fleets in the West Indies. — Byron convoys the homeward-bound fleet. — The French take St. Vincent's and Grenada. — Engagement between Byron and d'Estaing. — Proceedings in Georgia. — Corps of loyalists raised. — American force collected. — The American Colonel Ashe routed. — Measures of the Americans for defence of the Carolinas. — Irruption of the British into South Carolina. — Attack of the Americans on St. John's Island. — D'Estaing's ineffectual attempt on Savannah. — Delays in reinforcing Sir Henry Clinton. — Various successful expeditions directed by him. — Siege and relief of Penobscot. — Miserable fate of the American besiegers. — Arrival of Arbuthnot. — Americans attack Paulus Hook. — Their expeditio against the Indians. — Incursion of the Spaniards into West Florida. — Capture of Fort Omoa by the English — it is re-taken. — Senegal taken by the French — Goree by the English. — Sea fights between Captain Pierson and Paul Jones. — Captain Farmer and a French frigate. — State of the ministry — changes. — State of Ireland. — Increase of Volunteers. — Session of the Irish Parliament. — Debates on the address. — Popular measures — Limited Supply. — Riot in Dublin.

MEANWHILE the transatlantic war was carried on with various degrees of activity and success. The passage of Admiral Byron from North America to the West Indies was delayed by storms. His junction with Admiral Barrington gave an equality, if not a superiority to the British force, which reduced the French commander to the defensive, and during five months, neither insult nor opportunity could draw him from his retreat at Martinique. In this interval both fleets received reinforcements; the English under Admiral Rowley, the French under

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6th Jan.
State of the
French and
English
fleets in the
West Indies.

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Byron con-
voys the
trade.Capture of
St. Vincent's
by the
French.

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Grenada
also taken.

Count de Grasse ; but both remained inactive till Byron sailed for St. Christopher's to escort the homeward-bound fleet to a certain latitude.

His absence was the signal for commencement of D'Estaing's operations ; a body of four thousand and fifty men, commanded by Trolong du Romain, was dispatched against St. Vincent's. This island was in a miserable state of distraction : it was recently created a separate government under Valentine Morris, Esquire, a gentleman of good family, benevolent spirit, and enlarged liberality^a. The island was not yet divided into parochial districts, the means of government were incomplete, the fortifications out of repair, the Charribs sullen and intractable, anxiously expecting an opportunity to restore the sovereignty of the French ; while a rancorous party among the subjects of the crown impeded the exertions of the governor, facilitated the machinations of the Charribs and even maintained a traitorous correspondence with the enemy. The colony refused all assistance toward establishing a military force, and the English troops were composed, to use the governor's own expression, of "the very scum of the earth ; the refuse of the metropolis, the sweepings of jails, lamp-lighters, gypsies, and men superannuated, disabled, and discharged from other regiments." This motley force being ill calculated to oppose a numerous body of French troops, who landed and were joined by the Charribs, the governor was obliged to capitulate without resistance.^b

D'Estaing, again reinforced by a division under La Motte Piquet, commanded thirty-four ships of war, twenty-six of which were of the line, and a number of transports sufficient for the conveyance of nine thousand soldiers. He proceeded to the attack of Grenada, which was defended only by a hundred and

^a See an interesting account of Valentine Morris, in Coxe's *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*, chap. 40.

^b Principally from Governor Morris's *Narrative of his official conduct*.

fifty regulars, and about four hundred militia, who, being principally Frenchmen, soon diminished the garrison, by desertions, to less than three hundred. Lord Macartney, the governor, considering this force sufficient for the defence of some strong posts till succours could arrive, refused to capitulate. D'Estaing, unwilling to sacrifice the time requisite for regular approaches, stormed the lines: the garrison defended themselves with skill and bravery; once they repulsed the assailants, but being obliged to yield to numbers, retired into the fort, and had the mortification to see their own cannon turned against them. Lord Macartney now proposed terms of capitulation, which the ungenerous victor rejected, and proffered others so dishonourable that the high-spirited governor preferred a surrender at discretion to the baseness of subscribing them, and the French plundered without scruple or restraint.

A principal reason for pressing with such rapidity the reduction of Grenada, was the intelligence of Admiral Byron's return, which had been retarded by winds and currents. He had formed, with General Grant, a project for the recovery of St. Vincent's; but receiving, while at sea, information that the French squadron before Grenada was reduced to nineteen sail, and that Lord Macartney could maintain his position a fortnight, he changed his first destination, and attempted to succour that island. Having twenty-one ships of the line, beside transports, he arranged his signals for bringing on a general action, and did not discover the fallacy of his intelligence till several of his vessels were engaged. D'Estaing, notwithstanding his superiority of force, and the great advantages he derived from the excellent condition of his fleet, avoided a close and general conflict, and, foiled in all attempts to cut off the transports and intercept the disabled vessels, retired in the night to Grenada. The British admiral, conscious of his inferiority in strength, dispatched during the night his

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1st July.
Engage-
ment be-
tween
Byron and
d'Estaing.

3d July.

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transports and disabled ships to St. Christopher's, and calmly awaited the morning's attack, which, judging by his own character, he deemed inevitable. The returning dawn discovered to him the retreat of the enemy, and seeing the white flag mounted on the forts of Grenada, he followed the transports to refit at St. Christopher's^b. A general panic was now diffused through the British West Indies ; D'Estaing had boasted his resolution to conquer every island, and that he was even prepared with articles of capitulation for each^c ; but he soon relieved the inhabitants from their apprehensions, by retiring from Grenada to Cape Francois in Hispaniola.

Proceedings
in Georgia.

9th Jan.
Capture of
Sunbury ;

and Au-
gusta.

Corps of
loyalists
raised.

After taking Savannah, in Georgia, and driving the American troops across the river into South Carolina, General Prevost and Colonel Campbell assiduously employed themselves in receiving the inhabitants under protection, forming military corps, and framing regulations for the peace and security of the province. Their efforts, however, were not confined to these operations ; a successful expedition was undertaken against Sunbury, a fort which surrendered at discretion, yielding to the victors a considerable quantity of ordnance and stores, with two hundred and twelve prisoners. This exploit was only preparatory to the capture of Augusta, the second town in the province, by Colonel Campbell, the inhabitants generally taking oaths of fidelity, and forming military corps, under the British government. Colonel Hamilton, with a detachment of two hundred men, made a circuit of the province, for the purpose of encouraging these dispositions and disarming the disaffected ; he met with considerable success, though he occasionally discovered latent treachery.

^b D'Estaing's alarm was so great, that he would not even venture to take possession of the Lion of 64 guns, commanded by Captain Cornwallis, and the Cornwall of 74, Captain Edwards, which were dismasted and lying helpless between the two fleets. He afterward appeared off St. Christopher's, but would not venture to attack the British fleet which was drawn up in readiness to receive him.

^c Valentine Morris's Narrative, p. 78.

When his circuit was completed, a body of five hundred South Carolina militia, under Colonel Pickens, encountered him, but were put to flight; a number of loyalists from the interior of North Carolina, embodied under Colonel Boyd, endeavoured to force their way to Georgia, to join the royal forces, but Pickens defeated them at Kettle Creek, with considerable loss, including their commander; about three hundred reached Georgia; others returned and threw themselves on the mercy of their country, but were prosecuted as traitors to the new government; seventy were condemned, but only five executed.^d

It was soon found that Augusta could not be retained without great difficulty and danger, as it was a hundred and fifty miles distant from the main army. The Americans, alarmed for the fate of both Carolinas, hastily collected about three thousand militia, under Generals Ashe and Rutherford, but distrusting the ability of these commanders, soon afterward placed the force under the direction of General Lincoln, a native of Massachusetts. They issued proclamations for preventing the people from joining the royal standard and securing the cattle, and stretched their positions along the northern banks of the Savannah river, parallel to those of the British on the opposite side. General Ashe, with a detachment of fifteen hundred men, was ordered to strengthen the post opposite Augusta, but finding that fort abandoned, he crossed the river, to straiten the British quarters. Lieutenant-Colonel Prevost, brother of the general, crossing the Brier Creek fifteen miles above Ashe's encampment, stole on his rear unperceived, and totally routed and dispersed his force, with the loss of seven pieces of cannon, several stand of colours almost all the arms, artillery and baggage; a hundred and fifty killed on the field, a far greater number

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Loyalists
routed in
North
Carolina.American
force col-
lected.3d Mar.
Colonel
Ashe
routed.

^d The American writers describe these loyalists as mere outlaws; but their application of the word tory was so descriptive of every thing base and wicked, that other circumstances of guilt might be superadded without much intention to violate truth. See Ramsay, vol. ii. p. 113.

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Measures of
the Ameri-
cans for the
defence of
the Caroli-
nas.
23d April.

Irruption of
the British
into South
Carolina.

In effectual
attempt on
Charles-
town.
10th May.

drowned in endeavouring to escape, and two hundred prisoners. The whole party had been augmented, by reinforcements, to about two thousand, but not more than four hundred and fifty rejoined Lincoln.

Alarmed by approaching danger, the legislature of South Carolina invested their governor, John Rutledge and his council, with unlimited powers to act for the public good. This authority was vigorously employed in reinforcing General Lincoln, who soon found himself at the head of five thousand men. Leaving one thousand under Colonel Mackintosh and General Moultrie, to garrison Purysburg and Black Swamp, he began his march up the Savannah. Colonel Prevost, in hopes of inducing him to return, crossed over with the greatest part of his army into South Carolina, the detachments under Generals Mackintosh and Moultrie retiring before him, or offering only a feeble resistance; the American General, however, proceeded on his march, notwithstanding the frequent expresses which arrived demanding his presence. Lured, by intelligence of the defenceless state of Charlestown, the capital of South Carolina, Prevost resolutely advanced, reached the suburbs, and summoned the town; the inhabitants, who during his approach had been assiduously employed in improving their fortifications, and were reinforced by Moultrie's retreating detachment, by bodies of militia, and Pulaski's legion, contrived to consume a day in messages and answers relative to the terms of surrender, but their ultimatum being declared inadmissible, they passed the night in the horrors and consternation of an expected storm. Fear was however the only injury they sustained. Prevost, calculating the strength of the works, the insufficiency of his force, his want of artillery, ammunition and forage, and the probability of Lincoln's intercepting his retreat, wisely drew off his forces in the night, and without molestation, gained John's Island, where he awaited supplies from New York. Lincoln having

established a post at Augusta, retired by hasty marches to Charlestown, and till the departure of the British troops, established his head-quarters at Dorchester.

Colonel Prevost having fortified Stonyferry, which maintains the communication with the main land, soon left St. John's island to be defended by Colonel Maitland, with only five hundred effective men. General Lincoln, who had already once failed, now advanced with near five thousand men to dislodge the British troops from their post at Stony Point. For a time his success appeared indubitable, but the judicious and resolute exertions of this disproportioned force repelled the invaders. In the course of the action the garrison were destitute of ammunition, but Captain Moncrieff of the engineers obtained a supply by a spirited sally, and at the close of the engagement their last charge was actually in their pieces.

Soon after this attack, the American militia, disheartened and impatient of a longer absence from their plantations, quitted the army; the hot and sickly season rendering repose indispensable, the Americans retired to Sheldon; the British force evacuating the post at Stonyferry, established a new one at Beaufort, in the island of Port Royal, and the main body returning into Georgia, continued upward of two months in unmolested inactivity. The advantages attending the expedition into South Carolina were the establishment of a post at Beaufort, and the acquisition of provisions, the want of which began to be severely felt.

While hostilities were thus suspended, the Americans made application to D'Estaing, with the hope that his fleet would destroy the advantages which accrued to the English from their naval superiority. The French admiral speedily arrived with twenty sail of the line, two of fifty guns, eleven frigates, and a considerable number of transports, and surprised the Experiment, of fifty guns, with two storeships, and the Ariel frigate.

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Attack of
the Amer-
icans on
St. John's
Island.
16th June.

20th.

Ineffectual
attempt of
D'Estaing
on Savan-
nah.
September.

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11th.

23d.

4th to 9th
October.

9th.

The Americans made great efforts to co-operate with the French, and the British general spared no exertion to repel an attack which he expected on Savannah; the garrison was withdrawn from Sunbury, Colonel Maitland was ordered to evacuate Beaufort, and the small naval force was judiciously disposed by Captain Henry. When the French troops were disembarked, D'Estaing, without awaiting the junction of his provincial allies, in language ridiculously boastful, summoned Savannah to surrender to the French King. Prevost gained four-and-twenty hours for deliberation, during which Colonel Maitland arrived with eight hundred men, after surmounting incredible difficulties; and the governor thus reinforced, announced his resolution to defend the fort. Twelve days were consumed in preparations, before the French broke ground, during which the garrison annoyed them by two vigorous and successful sorties. The French and American troops, amounting to upward of ten thousand, continued an ineffectual cannonade during five days, while the whole garrison, even to the African slaves, vied in zeal and perseverance in strengthening the works, and mounting artillery.

Wearied at length with the delay of regular approaches, considering the dangers of the hurricane season, and the possibility of a British squadron attacking his fleet, while so great a part of his artillery was employed on shore, D'Estaing attempted to take the place by storm. Four thousand five hundred men, more than double the number of the garrison, were divided into two columns, one of which, under D'Estaing, assisted by General Lincoln, was to attack in front, while the other, under Count Dillon, was to gain the rear of the British lines. They were put in motion several hours before day. Dillon's division fortunately mistook the road, became entangled in a swamp, and was so galled by an incessant and well-directed fire from the garrison, that they could not

form. The column led by D'Estaing was repulsed, after maintaining a severe conflict, hand to hand, for possession of the principal redoubt. The admiral was slightly wounded, and the Polish volunteer, Pulaski, killed^e. The siege was forthwith raised; the Americans retired to South Carolina, and the French regained their shipping without molestation, as the garrison was not sufficiently numerous to adventure a pursuit. Their fleet was shortly afterward dispersed by a storm; part returned to the West Indies; and D'Estaing regained his native land. This boastful and vain-glorious commander was always distinguished by injustice and cruelty. His presumptuous mode of summoning the garrison disgusted the Americans; and his brutality in refusing to permit the women and children to take refuge on board English ships in his own custody, was rendered additionally contemptible by his endeavouring, after defeat, to throw the blame on his allies, and offering the very favour he had before withheld, which General Prevost rejected with becoming disdain. The raising of this siege terminated hostilities in the south.^f

During this whole campaign, Sir Henry Clinton remained in anxious expectation of reinforcements, the arrival of which was delayed by an extraordinary occurrence. They were proceeding down the British channel, under the convoy of Admiral Arbuthnot, but on receiving intelligence of the French attack on

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1779.

Delays in
reinforcing
Clinton.
2d May.

^e Pulaski was one of the conspirators who attempted to carry off the King of Poland in 1771. See Coxe's Travels in Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark, B. 1, c. 3.

^f While the siege of Savannah was pending, a remarkable enterprize was effected by Colonel John White, of the Georgia line. Captain French had taken post with about a hundred men, near the river Ogeechee, some time before the siege began. There were also at the same place, forty sailors on board five British vessels, four of which were armed. All these men, together with the vessels, and 130 stand of arms, were surrendered to Colonel White, Captain Elholm, and four others, one of whom was the Colonel's servant. In the night, this small party kindled a number of fires in different places, and adopted the parade of a large encampment, by which and other deceptive stratagems, they impressed Captain French with an opinion that nothing but an instant surrender, in conformity to a peremptory summons, could save his men from being cut to pieces by a superior force. Ramsay, vol. ii. p. 122.

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1779.

April.
Various suc-
cessful expe-
ditions di-
rected by
him.

May.

29th May.

30th.

Jersey, he ordered the transports into Torbay, and sailed for the relief of that island. On his arrival off Guernsey, he learned the repulse of the enemy, and hastened to accomplish his original destination, but when he returned to Torbay, the wind became unfavourable, and the troops arrived in America too late for the performance of any considerable enterprize.

Admiral Gambier, being recalled in the spring, the command of the British fleet in America devolved on Sir George Collier, an officer who had honourably distinguished himself on the Halifax station, in restraining the Americans from invading Nova Scotia, alarming their coast and distressing their trade. With this brave officer, Sir Henry Clinton planned an expedition to the Chesapeake, where large stores of tobacco, the chief means of maintaining the credit of congress, were accumulated, and from which place the army in the middle colonies was principally, if not wholly, supported by salted provisions, the produce of Virginia, and North Carolina. A detachment, amounting to eighteen hundred men, was embarked on board transports, and convoyed by the Raisonneable of sixty-four guns, four sloops, a galley, and some private ships of war. Their first attack was directed against Portsmouth, where they demolished a fort; expeditions were then made to Norfolk, Gosport, Kemp's Landing, and Suffolk, where great quantities of stores were seized, many vessels taken and several destroyed. To prevent a capture, a marine yard was burned, with all its timber; and the fleet returned in twenty-four days to New York, having destroyed and taken a hundred and twenty-seven vessels, and other property, estimated at half a million sterling.

When the detachment returned from Virginia, they were joined by troops already embarked on board transports, and proceeding up the North river, succeeded in capturing Stony Point, Fort La Fayette, and Verplank's Neck, without loss. These posts were

situate on opposite sides of Hudson's river, about sixty miles from New York, and the expedition was sufficiently important to claim the presence of Sir George Collier, and the commander-in-chief.

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1779.

Two thousand six hundred men, under Major-general Tryon and Major Grant, were next employed in an expedition against Connecticut, a principal source of strength to congress, well peopled, and abounding in provisions. The motives of the attempt were to convince the enemy that this favoured province was not unassailable, and to force General Washington from his strong situation on the North river, into the low country, for defence of the sea-coast. The troops possessed themselves of Newhaven, the capital of the colony, seized the artillery, ammunition, and public stores and all the vessels in the harbour. A proclamation, inviting the people to return to their allegiance, was disregarded; the troops were fired at from the windows, after they were in possession of the town, and even the sentinels placed to protect private property were wounded on their posts; yet the town was spared, and no plunder allowed; after dismantling the fort, the troops re-embarked and proceeded to Fairfield.

At this place they found a resistance more rancorous than at Newhaven, and as their lenity produced so bad a return, Fairfield, Norwalk, and Greenfield, were successively destroyed^s, and in nine days the commodore returned to confer with Sir Henry Clinton, on a projected operation against New London.

13th July.

The people of Connecticut were dissatisfied at the apparent neglect of General Washington and indifference of congress while these ravages were effected, and apprehensions were entertained of a revolt,

16th.

^s In resentment of these ravages, congress resolved, "To direct their marine committee to take the most effectual measures to carry into execution their manifesto of October 30th 1778, by burning or destroying the towns belonging to the enemy in Great Britain, or the West Indies;" but their resolve was never carried into effect.

CHAP. but their hopes were re-animated by the surprise of
 XXXVI. Stony Point. General Wayne achieved this exploit
 1779. with great judgment and valour ; he stormed the
 works, and although the nature of the opposition
 would have justified extremities, he generously fore-
 bore his rights as victor, and no man was killed but
 in battle. Fort la Fayette was also attacked, but before
 any considerable progress was made, the Americans,
 alarmed at the vigorous preparations of Sir Henry
 Clinton, evacuated Stony Point, after doing as much
 damage as their short possession would allow.

18th July.

Relief sent
to Penob-
scot.

17th June.

July.

21st.

13th Aug.

14th.

The attention of Sir George Collier and Sir Henry Cinton was now diverted from the meditated attack on New London, by the necessity of affording succour to a British establishment in the Bay of Penobscot, made by General Francis Maclean, with six hundred and fifty men, and three ships of war. This settlement was formed to check the incursions of the enemy into Nova Scotia, and obtain ship-timber for the King's yards at Halifax and in other parts of America. The executive government of Massachusetts Bay, by laying an embargo on all the shipping at Boston, and offering large bounties, levied a squadron of nineteen armed ships and brigantines carrying from thirty-two to ten guns, twenty-seven transports, and three thousand troops. General Maclean was only apprized of the designs of the enemy four days before their arrival ; he had not completed any part of his fortifications, but by the indefatigable industry and zealous emulation of the sea and land forces, he succeeded in keeping this formidable and disproportionate equipment at bay, during twenty-one days, perfecting in the mean time his defences, and harrassing the invaders by continual alarms and frequent enterprizes. At length he received information from a deserter, that on the ensuing day, a general attack would be made by land and sea : every preparation was adopted for repelling the assailants, but in the morning the garrison had the satisfaction to perceive that the invaders had

deserted their works, and were shipping their artillery, and evacuating the place. The welcome cause of this sudden movement was the fleet under Sir George Collier, to which the whole American armament would have been an easy prey, but most of the vessels were burned to prevent a capture. The crews and soldiers thus landed in a desert country, above a hundred miles from human habitation, without provisions, soon proceeded to contentions ; fifty or sixty were slain in a pitched battle, and a much greater number perished miserably in the woods.^h

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1779.

Miserable
fate of the
Americans.

This exploit terminated Sir George Collier's command. At the period when Admiral Arbuthnot arrived, a rumour that D'Estaing intended to attack New York, compelled Sir Henry Clinton to concentrate his forces, and even evacuate Rhode Island. The inactivity of General Washington, during the whole summer, is not satisfactorily explainedⁱ. It has been, with some probability ascribed to the evaporation of the original enthusiasm, and the mortification of the Americans at perceiving how little they were benefited by the assistance of a French fleet.^k The only enterprize attempted by Washington's army, was an attack on Paulus Hook, on the Jersey shore, from which, after a temporary success, they were expelled without effecting any material injury ; the whole proceeding is described by a judicious expression in Clinton's official dispatch : " their retreat was as disgraceful as their attack had been spirited and well conducted." They carried off forty prisoners.

Arrival of
Arbuthnot.

20th Aug.
Americans
attack on
Paulus
Hook.

Several expeditions were made against the Indians, in which the Americans took severe revenge for the injuries of which they complained, and proved that they had nothing to learn in the art of savage and deliberate cruelty.

Their ex-
peditions
against the
Indians.

^h See the Journal of the Siege of Penobscot, 8vo.

ⁱ It is to be regretted that the publication of Washington's official correspondence terminates with the year 1778.

^k Ramsay, vol. ii.

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1779.

August.
Incursion
of the
Spaniards
into West
Florida.

21st Sept.

Jan. to
March
1780.They attack
the logwood-
cutters in
the Bay of
Honduras.Capture of
fort Omoa
by the
English.

1779.

16th Oct.

As soon as the war with Spain was announced, Don Bernardo de Galves, governor of Louisiana, made an incursion into West Florida, which was but thinly inhabited, and for the protection of which against the Americans, a force of eighteen hundred men had been collected under General John Campbell. The Spaniards, with two thousand men, invested a fort built for defence of the frontier, near the mouth of the Iberville, garrisoned with five hundred troops, which they captured after a siege of nine days, and in its fall was involved the fate of all the British settlements on the Mississippi, from the Natches downward; honourable terms of capitulation were granted. It will prevent the necessity of recurring to this topic, to anticipate, that in the ensuing year the Spaniards made a fresh incursion into the province, and captured Fort Mobile, after an honourable resistance.

With equal eagerness, they commenced hostilities against the British log-wood cutters, in the Bay of Honduras, many of whom they took prisoners and treated with great barbarity, expelling the remainder from their principal settlement at St. George's Key. Governor Dalling dispatched Captain Dalrymple with a small party of Irish volunteers, to the Musquito shore, to collect a force, and convey arms for the assistance of the log-wood cutters. When he had perfected this part of his task, he met at sea a squadron of three frigates under Commodore Luttrell, and as St. George's Key had already been recaptured, the commodore and Dalrymple projected an attack on fort Omoa, the key to the whole settlement of Honduras. The land force, which, including the marines and musquetry-men from the ships, did not exceed five hundred, endeavoured to surprise the fort, but being discovered, were reduced to the necessity of making regular approaches. After some days fruitlessly expended, it was resolved, notwithstanding the great strength of the fortifications, to attempt an escalade. Hardly were the ladders pitched, when the assailants, only one

hundred and fifty in number, were discovered, and a tremendous fire opened; one ladder was destroyed, but by means of the others, two seamen gained the summit of the wall and presented their pieces, without firing, till the rest ascended. No persuasions of their officers could keep the astonished and terrified Spaniards to their stations, and the governor, at length, humbly supplicating for his life and that of his followers, surrendered the keys and his sword. The prisoners were three hundred and thirty-five; the treasure had been removed, but a galleon captured in the harbour was valued at three millions of piastres. The Spaniards offered to redeem, at any price, two hundred and fifty quintals of quicksilver, which were on board their vessels, and made liberal proposals for ransoming the fort; both were refused by the victors, who preferring the public good to private emolument, generously restored the church plate, which formed a considerable part of their booty, to procure the emancipation of their countrymen taken at St. George's Key, and detained in oppressive captivity at Merida. All these acts of heroism and disinterestedness produced, however, no permanent advantage. The victors could not afford a sufficient garrison; on the departure of the ships of war, the Spaniards assailed the fort, which an epidemical fever, and the fatigue of duty obliged the English to evacuate, after spiking the guns, and destroying the military stores.

Early in the year, the settlement of Senegal was captured by a French squadron, under M. de Vaudreuil. Goree being evacuated for the purpose of fortifying Senegal, was occupied by a British force, left for that purpose by Sir Edward Hughes.

In general the British commerce was amply protected, while that of the enemy suffered grievously in every quarter. The Baltic fleet, convoyed by Captain Pierson, in the Serapis of forty-four, and Captain Piercy, in the Countess of Scarborough of twenty guns, was chased on the northern coast of England by

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1779.

It is retaken.

Feb.
Senegal
taken by the
French;
Goree by the
English.

23d Sept.
Sea-fight be-
tween Cap-
tain Pierson
and Paul
Jones.

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a squadron consisting of the Bon Homme Richard of forty guns, two frigates of thirty-six and thirty-two, a brig of twelve guns, and an armed cutter fitted out at L'Orient, and commanded by a desperate outlaw named Paul Jones, who had obtained a commission in the American service. When this armament came in sight, Captain Pierson made a signal for his convoy to disperse and gain the nearest ports, in which they fortunately succeeded, while the two brave commanders, with their disproportionate force, encountered the enemy. Paul Jones did not evade the engagement, but having been foiled in some attempts to board, brought the Bon Homme Richard and the Serapis into such a situation, that the muzzles of their guns came in contact with the sides of the opposed ships. The conflict lasted three hours. Jones fought with the resolution of a criminal, whose life being forfeited to the laws, death in battle was the most eligible fate : Captain Pierson displayed valour not less determined, but influenced by nobler motives, and tempered by a merciful regard to the lives exposed under his command. After the Serapis had been several times set on fire by combustibles thrown from the Bon Homme Richard, all the officers and men stationed abaft the main-mast blown up by the explosion of some cartridges, and the guns in that quarter rendered unserviceable, Captain Pierson, seeing himself raked fore and aft by another frigate, to which he could oppose no resistance, struck his colours. The Countess of Scarborough, after a conflict not less resolute, though not equally dreadful, against an enemy of far superior force, was also obliged to yield. The loss onboard the Serapis was not perfectly ascertained, but undoubtedly very great: Captain Pierson estimated it at forty-nine killed and sixty-eight wounded, and the main-mast went by the board immediately after the action ; but the carnage on board the Bon Homme Richard was almost unprecedented ; her quarter and counter on the lower deck were driven

in, and all the guns on that deck dismounted ; she was on fire in two places, and had seven feet water in the hold ; while the deck streamed with the blood of three hundred and thirty-six men, being three-fourths of the whole crew, who were killed and wounded in the action. The ship sunk in two days, and the inhuman commander suffered several of the wounded to be buried with her in the ocean ; he was received with his prizes in the ports of Holland.¹

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Another naval action redounding to the honour of the British flag, was fought by Captain Farmer of the Quebec, assisted by the Rambler cutter, against a French frigate and cutter, of superior force ; in which the Quebec was burnt, and her brave commander, persisting in his resolution to be the last man to quit the ship, lost his life. With due attention to such merit, his son was created a baronet, and pensions were settled on the widow and children.

6th Oct.
Resolute
action of
Captain
Farmer.

While such was the varying aspect of the war, the ministry were embarrassed, dispirited and dissatisfied. From motives of liberality, they had employed in the military and naval service men hostile to their measures, who, instead of palliating the miscarriages of the war, increased, by their own complaints, the public uneasiness and the clamour of party. Thus, while the extent and importance of the contest were continually augmenting, the friends of administration were daily becoming more lukewarm, or even deserting their cause. Some felt consternation at the magnitude of the crisis, some gave ear to prophecies of final ill-success, and some changed their party from motives of fickleness, or from a conviction, that the ministry would not be long able to pursue their present measures.

State of the
ministry.

¹ The French minister, M. de Sartine, publicly expressed the king's approbation of Paul Jones, and disgraced the cross of merit by conferring it on him. Congress, with far greater propriety, acknowledged his zeal, prudence, and activity, by a vote of thanks, and promoted him to the command of a new ship called the America. Remembrance, vol. xiii. p. 107.

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XXXVI.1779.
3d June.
1778.
Changes.

Mar. 1779.

27th Oct.
24th Nov.Increase of
Irish volun-
teers.

Several changes were made in the cabinet : Mr. Thurlow receiving the great seal, with the dignity of peerage, sate during the late session as chancellor. His vigorous mind and stern manly sense rendered great service to government, and his firmness and ability often gave a beneficial impulse to the decisions of the cabinet. Mr. Wedderburne obtained the vacant situation of attorney-general, and Mr. Wallace succeeded him as solicitor-general. The office of secretary of state for the northern department had continued unoccupied since the decease of Lord Suffolk, though its duties were performed by Lord Weymouth, secretary for the southern department ; that nobleman now resigned his post, to which Lord Hillsborough was appointed ; the office of Lord Suffolk was conferred on Lord Stormont, late ambassador at Paris ; and the Earl of Carlisle was nominated first lord of trade and plantations.

Ministers were dissatisfied at the failure of the operations which they intended to promote by sending succours to the West Indies : the conduct of Admiral Arbuthnot was generally applauded ; but the consequences were highly unfortunate, and ministers grieved that a campaign of such great expence would be consumed almost in inaction.^m The insults offered to the coast, and alarm excited by the combined fleet in the channel, were in themselves sufficiently distressing to administration ; but they produced another effect not less embarrassing, by the encouragement they afforded to the volunteer associations in Ireland. Combining the alarm of invasion with the hope of procuring from the weakness and distraction of Great Britain some important concessions, the popular leaders of Irish politics gave every encouragement to these establishments ; the Duke of Leinster accepted the command of the Dublin corps,

^m Gibbon's Posthumous Works, vol. i. p. 540.

men of fortune and family bore muskets in the ranks, and contempt and derision were the portion of those who refused their services. The number of volunteers was exaggerated to sixty thousand, for such was the policy of that country as well as of America ; and the utmost tranquillity prevailed in all parts of the kingdom.^a

The prevailing wish was “ a free trade with all the world,” and in support of this pretension, the non-importation agreements were enforced and public resolutions passed, for confining the people to the use of their own manufactures, “ until all partial restrictions on trade, imposed by the illiberal and contracted policy of the sister kingdom, were removed.” The press issued, with freedom and boldnesss, the same sentiments ; all the disadvantages arising from the connection with England were recapitulated with acrimony ; and the conduct of government and

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1779.

Non-importation agreements.

^a Lord Sheffield, in his “ Observations on the present State of Ireland,” published in 1785, gives the following account of these extraordinary associations : “ It is necessary to notice a phenomenon which now began to appear. The like never has been observed in any country, at least where there was an established government. To describe it strictly, it may be called an army, unauthorised by the laws, and uncontrolled by the government of the country ; but it was generally known by the name of Volunteers of Ireland. Their institution bore some semblance of a connection with the executive power. Arms belonging to the state, and stored under the care of the lieutenants of counties, were delivered to them, upon the alarm of foreign invasion. So far they seemed to be countenanced by government, but in a short time they caused no little jealousy and uneasiness. The arms issued from the public stores were insufficient to supply the rapid increase of the volunteers. The rest were procured by themselves, and the necessary accoutrements, with a considerable number of field-pieces. It answered the purpose of opposition in both countries to speak highly of them, and the supporters of government in both countries mentioned them with civility. The wonderful efforts of England in America were somehow wasted to no purpose of decision. American success inflamed grievances which had been long felt in Ireland. Ireland in truth had infinitely more cause for complaint, and had been infinitely more oppressed than America , the latter had never submitted to half the hurtful restrictions in which the other had for many years quietly acquiesced. But now, petitions, remonstrances, popular resolves, and parliamentary addresses were vigorously urged, and in about four years Ireland was happily relieved from many commercial restraints, which should have been removed long before, and gained several other points which she thought essential to her welfare. The volunteers preserving a degree of reserve and decency, kept at a certain distance, but were never entirely out of sight. They had been serviceable in supporting the civil magistrate ; fewer castles, houses, or lands, were kept by forcible possession ; sheriffs were enabled to do their duty ; fewer rapes and other enormities were committed than usual : and here if the volunteers had stopped, and we had seen no more of them after the establishment of peace, their page in history would have been fair and respectable.”

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1779.

12th Oct.

Session of

the Irish

Parliament.

of the commercial part of the nation, was depicted as replete with cruelty, selfishness, tyranny, and contempt.^o

The state of the public mind could not fail to influence the proceedings of the Irish Parliament. The Earl of Buckinghamshire, the lord-lieutenant, opened the session with a conciliatory speech, assuring both Houses that amidst the cares and solicitudes inseparable from a state of hostility, the King had directed his attention to the interest and distresses of Ireland: he had remitted a large sum in specie^p for the defence of the kingdom, and would cheerfully co-operate in promoting the common welfare of all his subjects. The decline of the revenue, and arrears of government, were mentioned, the volunteer associations approved, and the attention of the legislature directed to domestic regulations, particularly the Protestant charter schools, and linen manufacture.

Debate on
the address.

The address was debated with great violence. Mr. Grattan declared the speech promised much, but offered nothing; it owned the distress of the country, but presented no relief: and he moved an amendment, representing the calamities of the nation, and beseeching His Majesty for a free trade, which was the birth-right of every Irishman. In the course of the debate, some members disclaimed the authority of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, and their right to interfere in the legislation of Ireland, which was an independent nation, subject only to the King, and to its own Lords and Commons. Mr. Grattan's amendment being considered too prolix, was modified into a declaration, that in the present posture of affairs, temporising expedients would not avail; the nation could only be saved from destruction by the allowance of a free and unlimited trade to

^o See *Considerations on the Expediency and Necessity of the present Associations*, Remembrancer, vol. viii. p. 185.

^p Fifty thousand guineas.

all her ports. The addresses were carried up with great parade; and attended with a thunder of popular acclamation; the Duke of Leinster in person escorted the Speaker from the House of Parliament to the castle, the streets being lined on both sides with volunteers, armed, and in uniform.

Inquiries were immediately instituted into the state of the pension list, secret service, national debt, expenditure of money voted for the defence of the kingdom, expences attending encampments and the produce of the hearth tax; and a committee was appointed on the state of the nation.

Apprehensive of some impediment either from the supporters of government in Ireland, or from the privy-council of Great Britain, in the principal object of obtaining a free trade, the popular party proposed to keep government in dependence and subjection, by passing a money bill to supply the Exchequer for six months only. As this measure met with violent opposition, the populace of Dublin, instigated perhaps by their superiors, assumed the privilege of directing the proceedings of the legislature. A mob of five or six thousand assembled before the House of Parliament, clamouring for a free trade and a short money bill: they stopped the Speaker in his coach, and tendering an oath to several of the members, compelled those who had not sufficient firmness for resistance, to bind themselves by that solemn obligation to support the favoured measures. Several were insulted and maltreated; but the great storm of popular fury fell on Mr. Scott, the attorney-general: he was called by name in each of the courts of law and equity, for the avowed purpose of being put to death; his house was broke open, and reduced to a ruin; and while his dwelling was filled with the yells and execrations of the furious rabble, anonymous letters assured him that he should not survive the hour of his vote against the short money bill. The civil arm was insufficient to

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1779.

October and
November.
Popular
measures.

15th Nov.
Limited
supply.

Riot in
Dublin.

16th Nov. 1779. C H A P restrain the tumult ; the blameable inefficiency of
XXXVI. the government suffered the military to be super-
seded by the volunteers, and these did not interfere
further than by a deputation from the lawyers' corps,
unarmed, persuading the mob, when satiated with
their own excesses, to disperse. The attorney-
general complained to the House of Commons, but
had the mortification to hear the sentiments of the
populace espoused, and their conduct partially de-
fended ; the debate was hardly less tumultuous than
the occasion of it ; the House at length agreed to
address the lord-lieutenant to issue a proclamation
for apprehending the rioters. The short money-
bill, however, passed, and, mortifying as such a pro-
ceeding must have been, received the sanction of
the privy-council.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

1779—1780.

Meeting of Parliament. — King's Speech. — Violent debates on the addresses. — Relief afforded to Ireland. — Efforts on the subject of economy. — Motion by the Duke of Richmond. — Burke gives notice of bringing in a bill for economical reform. — Meeting of the freeholders of Yorkshire. — Corresponding committees appointed. — The example of Yorkshire generally followed. — London committee formed. — Burke introduces his plan of reform. — His celebrated speech. — Resolution for abolishing the board of trade. — Commission of accounts appointed. — Bills for excluding contractors — and suspending the votes of revenue officers, rejected. — Account of Places — and of Pensions payable at the exchequer, laid before the house. — Duels between members of parliament. — Debates on the raising of volunteer regiments. Altercation between Lord North and Sir Fletcher Norton. — Numerous county and city petitions. — Intemperate language on introducing them. — Discussion of the petitions. — Resolutions passed on the influence of the crown. — The expenditure of the civil list — and the relief of the people. — The resolutions reported. — Motion for account of monies paid to members of parliament. — Vote for rendering certain officers incapable of sitting. — Illness of the Speaker. — Adjournment. — Motion against dissolving parliament — rejected. — Indignation of Fox. — Further proceedings on the petitions. — Report of the committee refused. — General observations.

SUCH were the general circumstances of disaffection and alarm at the commencement of a session of parliament, which in its progress was unusually turbulent, distinguished for acrimonious violence in debate, formidable attacks on the stability of government and delusive speculations on economy and reformation; attended with unusual associations among the people, and a dreadful explosion of popular violence which, in the very seat of government, braved

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1779.
25th Nov.
Meeting of
parliament.

CHAP. its authority, and left no measure for preserving the
 XXXVII. ^{1779.} constitution and defending life and property, but
 that, ever abhorrent to the principles of freemen,
 the military arm.

King's
speech.

The King in his speech, said, the parliament was called on by every principle of duty, and every consideration of interest, to exert united efforts in support and defence of the country, attacked by an unjust and unprovoked war, and contending with one of the most dangerous confederacies ever formed. Aided by the protection of Providence, the zeal of the nation, and the justice of his cause, he was firmly resolved vigorously to prosecute the war, for the purpose of compelling the enemy to equitable terms of peace.

He had not been inattentive to the addresses of last session respecting Ireland, but had ordered papers to be laid before parliament, and recommended to their consideration what further benefits might be extended to that kingdom, by regulations most effectually promoting the common strength, wealth and interests of all his dominions.

Amendment
to the ad-
dress moved
in the
Lords.

In opposing the address, the Marquis of Rockingham censured the facility with which the two ambassadors, Lord Grantham and Lord Stormont, had suffered themselves to be deceived by the craft of Spain and France, and the confidence with which ministers had assured parliament that treaties inimical to the interests of Great Britain were not in existence or even in embryo. The address recognized the blessings of His Majesty's government; but that recognition was unfounded in truth and an insult to the House. Nobis, no prejudice, no temptation, could so far confound truth and reason with their opposites, as to convert the very cause of our misfortunes into blessings. There was a time, indeed, at which he could have congratulated the King on the blessings enjoyed under his government. He remembered when His Majesty ascended the throne of his ancestors with glory and lustre; but for the last seventeen years those blessings

had gradually decreased, and the nation was reduced to an unexampled state of degradation. This change he attributed to a baneful and pernicious system of unconstitutional controul and advice. As the system was wrong in its first concoction, so its effects were extended to every department. The greatest officers were driven from the service and proscribed, in a period of the most imminent danger; and Lord Sandwich was not ashamed to retain his office, although he knew that his continuance precluded naval commanders of the most exalted character and abilities from serving their country.

From the unpopularity of the first lord of the admiralty, the Marquis turned to its cause, his personal incapacity, which he instanced in the negligent defence of the northern shores of the kingdom: the town of Hull was kept in continual alarm by apprehensions of Paul Jones; Captain Pierson was relied on as sufficient in force for their protection; but to the utter disappointment of the inhabitants, he was unable, with the most resolute valour, to prevent his own capture.

The discontents in Ireland were ascribed to the bad faith of ministers, who promised to produce measures of relief before the rising of Parliament; but, although the session continued seven weeks, paid no further attention to the subject; the people were consequently left in suspense, the associators were permitted to become important, and concessions, which would then have been received as favours, were now demanded as rights not to be resigned, modified, or qualified. The Marquis then adverted to the progress of hostilities in America, censuring with unrestrained severity, the proclamation issued by the commissioners, as an accursed manifesto, the forerunner of a war of the most horrid and diabolical nature; a war not merely contrary to the Christian religion, to the acknowledged principles of morality and humanity, to the laws of war, and the modes of carrying on hos-

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tilities, observed even among Turkish and other sanguinary nations ; but to the last degree bloody, malignant and diabolical. It would be a precedent and a justification to France and Spain in landing on the least defended parts of the British coast and committing ravages without hope of benefit. He accordingly moved an amendment, omitting the whole address except the title, and “ beseeching His Majesty to reflect on the extent of territory, the power, the opulence, the reputation abroad, and the concord at home, which distinguished the opening of his reign, and marked it as the most happy and splendid period in the history of the nation ; and on the endangered, impoverished, enfeebled, distracted, and even dismembered state of the whole, after all the grants of successive parliaments, liberal to profusion, and trusting to the very utmost extent of rational confidence.” Nothing could prevent the consummation of public ruin, he observed, but new councils and new counsellors ; a real change, proceeding from a sincere conviction of past errors, and not a mere palliation, which must prove fruitless.

The debate engaged an extensive discussion on the state of the kingdom and all its dependencies, which was represented as most deplorable by the Dukes of Richmond and Grafton, Lord Shelburne, Lord Camden, Lord Effingham, Lord Townshend, and Lord Lyttleton, who again appeared in the ranks of opposition, and decried the American war, as a mad Quixotic sally. The cause of government was ably defended by the lords in administration to whose particular departments the specific complaints applied. Lord Stormont denied that the calamities which surrounded the nation ought to be ascribed to the confederacy in arms, the situation of Ireland, or the conduct of ministers ; but they arose from internal division, and the violent and incautious language too often held in parliament. Lord Mansfield declared, that from the distressed and perilous situation of the

country, he was persuaded nothing but a full and comprehensive union of all parties, and all men, could effect its salvation : he was old enough to remember the realm in very embarrassed situations; he had seen violent party struggles, but no previous time presented an image of the present. How far the temper of the nation and state of parties might admit of a coalition he could not decide ; but the event was devoutly to be wished. Such was the alarming state of affairs, that the country loudly claimed the assistance of every heart and hand ; and though such a co-operation might prevent despair, yet the most confident and resolute of mankind must discern sufficient motives to stagger his confidence, and shake his resolution.

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The amendment was negative.⁹

Lord John Cavendish moved an amendment to the address of the House of Commons, agreeing verbatim with that of the Marquis of Rockingham. The debate was conducted with great asperity, and few instances are found in history of so great an intemperance of speech. The mover of the amendment, adverting with a sneer to the mention of Divine Providence in the speech from the throne, observed, Providence was indeed the great ally to whom alone the kingdom owed its preservation ; an inferior fleet, a defenceless coast, an exhausted treasury, presented an easy prey to the enemy ; ministers supine, negligent and divided, had brought the realm to the verge of destruction ; but Providence interposed, and the danger blew over. Such were the glaring absurdities, criminal omissions and scandalous inconsistencies of administration, that, unless they were banished from the royal presence, and this system totally overturned, the nation must inevitably fall under the power of its enemies.

In the House
of Commons.

The King, it was observed, had not in his speech once mentioned America: the accursed war with that

CHAP. country had cost many millions of money, many
xxxvii. thousands of lives, yet it was not noticed by the
1779. King, unless included in the general term, "all my
dominions," though by the omission of a more par-
ticular mention, it might be supposed the King saw
the necessity of renouncing all claim to sovereignty
over the colonies.

The internal defence of the kingdom, and the protection of its external possessions, the guaranty of trade, and the honour of the national flag, were shamefully and wickedly neglected. Enormous sums had been voted for the army, and expended without an appearance of economy; instead of detaching parts for occasional services, the unwieldy machine was kept idle and inactive at home. The modelling of the military body was scandalous and unjust: the experienced veteran was superseded by the raw sub-altern, who had the advantage, not of superior merit, but superior patronage; and thus the quick sense of honour, irritated at undeserved indignity, was exhausted in complaints and murmurings. The terrified merchant trusted with reluctance his property on the sea, while the channel was covered with the fleets of France and Spain and the intercourse with the ocean in a great measure intercepted. These considerations depressed the spirits of all who were engaged in commerce, and affected the manufactures. The lower class of people were unemployed, and the value of land suffered an alarming and rapid decrease. In the West Indies, Dominica captured, St. Vincent's wrested from us, and Grenada once more under the obedience of France. Misfortune and dejection were impressed on the countenance of every gentleman who had property in those islands; their fortunes had been crushed, if not annihilated, by the shock. The coast of Scotland was naked and defenceless; Paul Jones might have destroyed Glasgow, Leith, Greenock, and Edinburgh: the people of Dumfriesshire had petitioned for arms, but sustained a mortifying refusal.

Plymouth, the second naval arsenal in the kingdom, had been left undefended. Providence alone had protected it; for such was the superiority of the combined fleets, that the British navy skulked in the channel, hiding among the rocks for safety, and stealing out without daring to fire signal guns; while the artillery of the enemy thundered in the ears of the people, and kept Plymouth in continual alarm. The garrison was so weak, and so little capable of resistance, that had the enemy landed, they must have destroyed the town: "We would have met them," said Mr. Minchin, "with the spirit of Englishmen, but sure I am that to a man we must have perished."

In the course of debate, an assertion was attributed to the friends of administration, that the King was his own minister, his own admiral in chief, his own general; his own secretary, his own president of the council, and his own financier. Although Lord North denied the assertion, Mr. Fox animadverted on it as a doctrine dangerous to the constitution, tending to remove responsibility from those who ought to bear it, to him who can do no wrong, and cannot be called to account. But although, in general, the evils of a reign might be attributed to wicked ministers, still when those amounted to a certain height, the ministers were forgot, and the prince alone encountered the indignation of the people. Charles I. and James II. paid for the crimes of their ministers, the one with his life, the other with his crown: their fate presented a salutary admonition for succeeding sovereigns, to restrain, and not blindly follow, the dictates of their servants. It was not a secret, nor should it be a moment absent from the King's recollection, that he owed his crown, to the delinquency of the Stuart family. The pretensions of that unfortunate and detested race could occasion no alarm; but were one of them remaining, what scope for upbraiding and remonstrances could he not find in the present reign. "You have banished my ancestors," he might ex-

CHAP. claim, “from the throne, and barred the sceptre
XXXVII. against all his progeny for the misconduct of his
1779. ministers, yet your present ministers are ten times more
wicked and ignorant; and whilst you give your sovereign
the title of best of princes, his ministers have
rendered his reign beyond comparison, the most infamous
that ever disgraced the nation.”

“No period in the history of the country,” he observed, “furnished a parallel to the present, except the reign of Henry VI. His family, like that of the King, did not claim the crown by hereditary descent; both owed it to revolutions; both were amiable and pious princes. Henry was the son of the most renowned monarch that ever sat on the throne; George was grandson of a hero: Henry lost all his father’s conquests, and all his hereditary provinces in France; George had already seen the conquests of his grandfather wrested from him in the West Indies, and his hereditary provinces of America erected into an empire that disclaimed his connexion. Brighter prospects could not be imagined than those which distinguished the commencement of His Majesty’s reign: possessed of immense dominions, and the warmest affections of his people, his accession was highly flattering to himself and his subjects. How sadly was the scene reversed! his empire dismembered, his councils distracted, and his subjects abating their fondness for his person. The patience of the people was not unlimited: they would at last do themselves justice by insurrections; and though the attendant calamities could not be justified, or compensated by any resulting good, yet they were inevitable. Treachery, and not ignorance, must have prevailed in the national councils, to reduce the nation to so miserable a condition; the minister might flatter himself in the protection of a majority, or security of the law; but when a nation was reduced to such a state of wretchedness and distraction that the laws could afford the people no relief, they would afford the ministers, who had

caused the evil, but little protection. What the law of the land could not, the law of nature would accomplish; the people would inevitably take up arms, and the first characters in the kingdom would be seen in the ranks!"

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Lord George Gordon, whose intemperate fanaticism, and audacious virulence, had often disgraced the House, insisted that the King's speech abounded in impropriety, and was deficient in commonsense: the ministry were no less odious in Ireland than in England; and the people of Scotland were almost equally prepared to rise in opposition. Adverting to the refusal to permit the arming of the inhabitants of Dumfriesshire, he read a letter to the Duke of Queensbury from the secretary at war: then suddenly apostrophising that minister, "and you Charles Jenkinson," he exclaimed, "how durst you write such a letter! Robert Bruce would not have dared to write such a one: and yet the secretary of an elector of Hanover, has had the presumption to do it; the royal family of Stuart were banished for not attending to the voice of their people; and yet the elector of Hanover is not afraid to disregard it. Sir Hugh Smithson, Earl Percy, (Duke of Northumberland) armed cap-a-pie, marches at the head of all the cheesemongers and grocers from Temple-bar to Brentford, and the great Earl Douglas of Scotland is not to be entrusted with arms. The Scotch are irritated at this partiality; and in point of religion they are exasperated, as they are convinced the King is a Papist."

This torrent of ribaldry was arrested by the interposition of the Speaker, but unlimited acrimony prevailed during the whole debate. The adherents of administration were loaded with personal abuse, and national reflections were not spared. "Three northern oracles of the long robe, recommended, no doubt to favour by the singular loyalty of their houses, had introduced," Mr. Temple Luttrell said, "a baleful policy into the government. 'Taxation or starvation,'

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was the laconic and energetic expression of the lord advocate of Scotland: 'Let loose the savage Indians, more fierce than the blood-hounds of Columbus, and employ the negro servants to butcher their master,' exclaims the attorney-general: 'The Rubicon, the Rubicon,' is the word of the chief justice of the King's Bench, the last of this worthy, amiable triumvirate, 'We must go forward through proscriptions, devastation and carnage.' And this our modern hero of the Rubicon, who must soon render an awful account before a judge far mightier than himself, instead of leaving commentaries on the laws and constitution of England, will bequeath commentaries on the American campaigns, from which future leaders, under avengeful commissions, may learn their best lessons of barbarity, and improve in every art of increasing human wretchedness. And yet the day is not far distant, when in the words of their countryman (Macbeth) they shall call out in a woeful concert 'we but teach bloody instructions, which being taught return to plague the inventors.'"

Perhaps this unusual virulence of invective enabled ministers to make their defence more readily than a temperate opposition, joined to the circumstances of the times, would have allowed them to expect. The extreme irritability and indecent violence of the minority, justified the observation of Mr. Adam, that these days exhibited the political phenomenon of an unsuccessful ministry, and an unpopular opposition.

All the ministers concurred in denying that they had endeavoured to evade responsibility, by implicating the personal character of His Majesty, in their measures; such an attempt would not have been less absurd than unconstitutional, since the law annexed to their situations a responsibility, which no artifice could compromise or avoid. The principal defence of administration rested on Lord North, who reduced the whole matter of complaint against the cabinet to the single fact that the house of Bourbon possessed a

greater naval force than Great Britain. That they ^{CHAP.} had been permitted to collect this force unmolested and undisturbed, could not be imputed as a crime ; but a review of the campaign would shew that disgrace, not honour, had accrued to them from its progress. They had equipped a formidable armament, threatened, performed nothing, and retired : their professed object was invasion, they had not dared to make the attempt, and were therefore foiled ; their armaments had paraded to no purpose, and their millions were squandered in vain ; he almost wished they had landed, convinced that a British militia would have added defeat to their present disgrace. It was not candid in opposition to attribute the protection of our trade entirely to Providence ; it could not escape their penetration, that for an admiral with thirty-six or forty sail of the line, to keep in check a fleet consisting of sixty-six sail, required more than common abilities ; nor could they refuse to acknowledge, that by keeping together such an immense armament, which might otherwise have been separated and employed on specific operations, the British admiral had rendered an important service to trade, and merited admiration and applause. It was asked, why the junction of the two hostile fleets had not been prevented ? Such had been the intention of ministers, but the French, in order to anticipate it, had put to sea in so bad a state of preparation, that many of their ships were afterward obliged to return into port. The British fleet, on which the existence of the nation depended, could not, for the sake of avoiding delay, sail in an imperfect condition, but had Sir Charles Hardy known in the summer the internal state of the combined fleet, he would have desired and sought an engagement, which, from the health, spirit, activity, and superior naval skill of the British squadron, could only have terminated gloriously for the country. Plymouth had been re-in-

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forced at the moment of danger, and was now in a condition to defy the united efforts of the House of Bourbon; the navy was daily augmenting, and though he was averse to render disappointment dreadful, by sanguine predictions, he had the firmest hope of a brilliant campaign in the spring.

The secretary at war vindicated or palliated several imputed acts of misconduct in the management of the army; and the attorney-general and Mr. Dundas reinforced Lord North's general arguments with many judicious and apposite observations. The amendment was negatived.

Affairs of
Ireland
discussed.

1st Déc.
Lord Shel-
burne's
motion.

In these debates frequent allusions were made to the state of Ireland, and the miseries and expectations of the people: the members of administration in both houses gave positive assurances, that plans and arrangements were in contemplation, which would give entire satisfaction to that branch of the empire. Before these intentions could be put in execution, Lord Shelburne, having obtained a summons of the house, recapitulated the proceedings of the last session, blamed the delay of ministers in affording relief, and attributed to that circumstance, the prevalent disaffection and formidable front of resistance in Ireland. The government had been abdicated, and the people, were justified, by the principles of the constitution and the laws of self-preservation, in resuming the powers. He would not, however, gather their sentiments from the proceedings of county and town meetings, the language of associations, and the general spirit, but confine himself to an authentic state paper; the address of both houses of parliament, which declared that "nothing less than a free trade would rescue the kingdom from ruin." This was the united voice of the nation, conveyed to the throne, through the proper constitutional organs; in it, all parties and descriptions of men concurred; church of England men, Roman Catholics, dissenters and sectaries of

every class ; whigs and tories, placemen, pensioners, and country gentlemen ; Englishmen by birth, in short, every man in and out of parliament : such was the present temper of Ireland. When, during the last session, their affairs were submitted to parliament, moderate concession, and the hope of obtaining more in future, would have satisfied them ; but now, from the misconduct, incapacity, and, above all, the shameful inattention of ministers, Great Britain was driven to the melancholy terms of submitting to the dictates of Ireland, or of losing Ireland as well as America. He attributed much of this misconduct to Lord North, who eternally slept when he should be awake, was scarcely ever attentive, but when alacrity led to error, and who never moved with more than his accustomed pace, however pressing the exigency or imminent the peril ; similar, in this, to the French general, who, though he received intelligence that forty thousand men were in danger of being surrounded, could not be prevailed on to put his horse into a trot.

His lordship reviewed the complaints and grievances of Ireland, attributing them chiefly to the power of the crown in disbursing the hereditary revenue, and the mischievous disposal of church preferment, and to the rejection of bills calculated for relief, by the interference of the minister in the House of Commons. From these causes, instead of ten or twelve thousand associators, full four times the number were well armed and accoutred, and daily improving in discipline. The honour and dignity of the crown were disgraced. The sword was dropped, and the people had taken it up, on the double motive of defending themselves against a foreign enemy, and obtaining by arms justice, which, as in the case of America, had been denied to their humble applications, and the repeated narratives of their calamities and distress. He concluded by moving a vote of censure on ministers, for neglecting to take effectual measures for the relief of Ireland, in

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CHAP. consequence of the address of the 11th of May, and
 XXXVII. suffering the discontents to arise to a height which en-
 dangered the political connexion of the two coun-
 tries.

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Lord Hillsborough defended the conduct of administration, and proved that no delay could be fairly imputed ; measures for relief of Ireland could not be adopted by government, but must flow from the legislature, and could not be entered on without proper information. A letter had been written in May to the lord lieutenant, and an answer received only in July, replete with important information ; since which time, ministers had been indefatigably employed in making arrangements, and the result would be speedily communicated to parliament.

Much extraneous matter was introduced into the debate, as well by Lord Shelburne, as those who followed him, tending to convey censure both on particular members of the cabinet, and on the collective body of administration. Lord Abingdon recited a threat of Lord Lyttleton, who died since the beginning of the session ; importing, that he would reveal matters, respecting the ministry, which all their arts of imposition, and hitherto unshaken effrontery, could not countervail. The Marquis of Rockingham related an anecdote respecting the purchase of the clerkship of the pells from Mr. Fox to bestow it on Mr. Jenkinson, which loaded the Irish establishment with an addition of three thousand pounds a-year. Lord Gower opposed the motion, though convinced that the censure was well founded ; “ he had presided,” he said, “ for some years at the council table, and had seen such things pass there of late, that no man of honour or conscience could sit any longer.” The times required explicit declarations ; he had supported the American war, on principle, and was still confident that the resources of the country were sufficient to resist the dangerous confederacy by which it was

opposed; but to profit by those resources, energy and effect must be restored to government. Lord Shelburne's motion was negatived.

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1st Dec.
Motion in
the House
of Commons.

On the same day in which this motion was discussed in the Upper House, Lord North communicated to the Commons additional papers on the subject of Ireland, promising the remainder with all convenient expedition, and that in eight days he would introduce a plan which would convince the sister kingdom of the genuine good-will toward her, which governed His Majesty's councils. This intimation did not prevent the Earl of Upper Ossory from introducing to the House a motion of censure, exactly similar to that of Lord Shelburne, which he enforced by nearly the same arguments.

6th Dec.

The vote was opposed on the general principle that no neglect had been proved, and that the charge was not specifically pointed. The grievances of Ireland did not originate with the present ministers; nor was any act of theirs included in the complaint, which embraced a series of acts of parliament from the twelth of Charles II. to the beginning of the present reign, but none since His Majesty's accession. The Irish desired a free trade. Had the ministry restrained their trade? on the contrary they had enlarged it; they had given bounties on the Newfoundland fishery, encouraged the growth of hemp and tobacco, permitted the exportation of woollen for clothing the troops of that country, and of several articles to the West Indies and the coast of Africa: they had conferred more benefits on the Irish nation in the compass of a few years than all the other administrations since the Revolution. Earl Nugent, though he loved his native country, disapproved the motion. He had proposed (and he considered the proposition wise and liberal) to relieve Ireland from the restrictions on commerce. His views were to pro-

CHAP. duce equal benefits to both countries (for God
xxxvii. forbid he should advance any local interest to the
1779. general prejudice of the British empire) and grant
to Ireland every indulgence which could promise
substantial benefit without injury to Great Britain.
Many branches of manufacture and commerce were
monopolized, to the great detriment and impover-
ishment of Ireland, without material benefit to Eng-
land.

In discussing the mere merits of the motion, few opportunities occurred of blaming or distressing ad-
ministration; but the most perverse and malignant
mode was adopted of drawing parallels between
Ireland and America; stating the conduct of the
one to be no less rebellious than that of the other,
and braving the minister to exercise similar ven-
geance. "Ireland," it was said, "spurned at the
British claim of dominion, considering herself free
and independent, and was determined to maintain
the principle. A mob had risen in Dublin, and non-
importation agreements had taken place; why not,
like ill-fated Boston, shut up the port of Dublin, burn
Cork, reduce Waterford to ashes? Why not pro-
hibit all popular meetings in that kingdom, and de-
stroy all popular elections? Why not alter the usual
mode of striking juries, as was done by the Mas-
sachusetts charter act? Why not bring the Dublin
rioters over to this country to be tried by an English
jury? Why not shut up their ports, and prevent
them from trading with each other? And lastly,
why not declare them out of the King's peace? In
short, why not proscribe the principal leaders who
held commissions, not under the crown, but by the
election of the very corps which they commanded,
and declare the whole kingdom in rebellion? The
answer was plain and direct; ministers dare not:
sad and dear-bought experience had taught them
the folly as well as impracticability of such measures;
the danger of the present awful moment made in-

solence and arrogance give way to fear and humiliation!" The motion was rejected.^u

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13th Dec.
Relief af-
forded to
Ireland.

Lord North, in pursuance of his promise, introduced three propositions for the relief of Ireland, allowing a free export of wool, woollens, and wool flocks; of glass and all kinds of glass manufactures; and a free trade with the British plantations on certain conditions, the basis of which was an equality of taxes and customs. The minister's speech was one of the most able, intelligent, and satisfactory, which had ever been delivered in parliament. The first two bills passed without delay; the third was arrested in its progress till the sentiments of the Irish could be ascertained. But although great pains were taken to inflame the pride and increase the pretensions of that nation, by representing the concessions as matter of right not of favour, as a tribute to their military spirit, not as a spontaneous effusion of affection, the parliament was too wise to depreciate present gain by remote and useless speculation, both Houses received the acts with great satisfaction, and expressions of loyalty to the King and esteem for the British legislature: and the people declared the utmost cordiality and friendship towards England.^x Lord North, with only a few impediments from Lord George Gordon, and other subalterns of opposition, perfected his original plan, adding to the measures already enumerated, a repeal of the prohibitions on exporting English gold coin and importing foreign hops, and enabling the Irish to become members of the Turkey company, and trade to the Levant.

2d Feb.

1780.

While the minister was thus endeavouring to restore tranquillity to the sister kingdom, the spirit of disaffection was studiously excited in England, by appeals on a subject which never fails to interest the feelings of a commercial nation, the expenses of government, and the necessity of economy. A jea-

Efforts on
the subject
of economy.^u 173 to 100.^x See Lord Irnham's speech in the House of Commons the 24th January, 1780.

CHAP. lous vigilance over the national purse is one of the
 XXXVII. most sacred duties of a member of parliament ; and
 1779. every exertion apparently instigated by that motive
 gains credit and regard from the most sedate and
 prudent part of society. It is easy to combine with
 the performance of this duty a harsh and coarse ap-
 peal to the prejudices of the vulgar and inconsider-
 ate, by declaiming against the splendour of royalty,
 the expensiveness of sinecure and other places
 and the luxury of dependents on the court, com-
 pared with the penury of the people at large. These
 unworthy efforts rarely fail of their effect, especially
 in a costly and unsuccessful war. To these topics the
 opposition now had recourse, and blended with this
 dangerous and fallacious mode of discussion, the in-
 ference, still more dangerous and fallacious, that all
 these expenses were not only detrimental to the pe-
 cuniary interest of the people, but that their liberties
 were bought and sold with their own plunder, as all
 the supplies extorted from them were employed to
 extend the undue influence of the crown. This was
 the political text of the whole session, and was dilat-
 ed on in such a manner as to occasion more danger
 to the safety of government than a successful rebel-
 lion, and a hostile foreign confederacy had been able
 to effect.

In conformity with this principle, the estimates
 and supplies were censured with peculiar acrimony ;
 and no argument left unessayed which could beget
 uneasiness in the public mind, and convert a whole-
 some attention to pecuniary interest into a feverish
 solicitude about economy.

7th Dec.
 Motion by
 the Duke of
 Richmond.

The first attempt to give to this dangerous prin-
 ciple its desired direction was made by the Duke of
 Richmond, who moved for an address, intreating the
 King to reflect on the manifold distresses of the
 country ; that profusion was not vigour, and that it
 became indispensably necessary to adopt that true
 economy, which by reforming all useless expences

creates confidence in government; submitting to his consideration, that a considerable reduction of the civil list would be an example well worthy his affection for his people, and would extend through every department of the state; and assuring him, that any member of the House would cheerfully submit to such reduction in the emoluments of office as His Majesty should think proper.

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In support of this motion, the Duke recapitulated the large war establishment which Great Britain was obliged to maintain, the immense expense with which it was attended, and the frightful increase of the national debt. He contrasted the state of this country with that of France, where M. Necker had borrowed near four millions sterling in two years without imposing any taxes, but providing for the interest by savings; thus our inveterate enemy was adopting the wise system of economy, while we were daily plunging deeper into boundless extravagance. The whole landed property of Great Britain was mortgaged for an annual payment of eight millions, and the land and sea force to be maintained for the current year was already announced at two hundred and seventy-three thousand men. He did not wish to abridge the dignity and splendour of the crown; but the King ought to set the example of retrenchment, which he had no doubt the lords would cheerfully follow. In an explanatory speech he said "I do not intend to deduct from the stipends settled on persons who have wasted fortunes in the service of the country; the Pelhams, the Walpoles, and the Pitts, are names remembered with sufficient gratitude to make their pensions sacred."

In the debate other popular topics were introduced; as, the influence of the crown, and the necessity of a radical reform. The objections to the motion were, that none of the facts it recited were authenticated; a *considerable* reduction conveyed no specific meaning, nor could any minister presume to advise the King

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under such a vote. Even should the address be presented, His Majesty, was not bound to pay regard to it; the civil list was established by act of parliament, and could not be retrenched by the decision of one House; nor could any thing but an act of parliament founded on information, which it would be laborious and difficult to obtain, effect a reduction in every species of official emolument. The civil list would not in fact bear any diminution, and it would be a baseness in parliament, after so recently voting an augmentation, to declare their inability to make good their own grant. The motion was considered as intended only to effect the removal of administration, and an explicit avowal of that purpose would have been more candid and honourable. It was rejected.^y

15th. Dec.
Burke gives
notice of his
intention to
bring in bills
for econo-
mical re-
form.

The subject of economical reform was introduced into the Lower House by Mr. Burke, who gave notice of his intention to propose, after the recess, some important regulations. Like the Duke of Richmond, he vaunted the beneficial retrenchments of Necker, to which he attributed the creation of a marine from the rubbish, wrecks, and fragments of the late war. The British minister, on the contrary, never gave a hint, never directed a glance toward the important subject of economy, though the Dutch practice and the Roman principle might have taught him that old and true lesson, *magnum vectigal est parsimonia*^z; but if ministers were thus negligent, it was the duty of the House to comply with the general wish of the people. He anticipated a cold reception of his propositions, as they would tend to weaken the influence of the court; men out of office could only offer, the people must achieve the rest; if they were

^y 77 to 37.

^z In quoting this apophthegm Burke inadvertently used a false quantity, pronouncing the word vectigal, vectigal. The classical ear of Fox immediately caught the error, and in a whisper he corrected his colleague. Burke, with great presence of mind, turned the incident to advantage; "My honourable friend informs me," he said, "that I have mistaken the quantity of a principal word in my quotation: I am glad, however to repeat the inestimable adage," and with increased energy, he thundered forth, "magnum vect-i-gal est parsimonia."

not true to themselves, no other power could save them. All the grievances of the nation arose from the fatal and overgrown influence of the crown; and that influence itself from the enormous prodigality of the commons. Formerly the operation of influence was confined to the superior orders of the state; it had of late insinuated itself into every creek and cranny in the kingdom. There was scarcely a family so hidden and lost in the obscurest recesses of the community, which did not feel that it had something to keep or to get, to hope or to fear, from the favour or displeasure of the crown. Some degree of influence was necessary for government; but for the sake of government, for the sake of restoring that reverence which was its foundation, the exorbitancy of influence ought to be restrained. Every one must be sensible of the increase of influence, and the degradation of authority. The reason was evident: government should have force adequate to its functions, but no more; if it had enough to support itself, in abusing or neglecting them, they must ever be abused, or neglected: men would rely on power for a justification of their want of order, vigilance, foresight, and all the virtues, all the qualifications of statesmen. The minister might exist, but the government was gone.

“It is thus,” he exclaimed, “that you see the same men, in the same power, sitting undisturbed before you, though thirteen colonies are lost. Thus the marine of France and Spain has quietly grown and prospered under their eye, and been fostered by their neglect. Thus all hope of alliance in Europe is abandoned. Thus three of our West India islands have been torn from us in a summer. Thus Jamaica, the most important of all, has been neglected, and all inquiry into that neglect stifled. Thus Ireland has been brought into a state of distraction, that no one dares even to discuss; the bill relating to it, though making great and perplexing changes, is such, that no one knows what to say, or what not to say respect-

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ing it. Our parliamentary capacity is extinguished by the difficulty of our situation. The bill has been mumbled over with rapidity ; and it passes in the silence of death. Had government any degree of strength, could this have happened ? Could the most ancient prerogative of the crown, with relation to the most essential object, the militia, have been annihilated with so much scorn as it has been, even at our doors ? Could His Majesty have been degraded from the confidence of his people of Ireland in a manner so signal, and so disgraceful, that they who have trusted his predecessors in many particulars for ever, and in all, for two years, should have contracted their confidence in him to a poor stinted tenure of six months ? Could the government of this country have been thus cast to the ground, and thus dashed to pieces in its fall, if the influence of a court was its natural and proper poise ; if corruption was its soundness ; and self-interest had the virtue to keep it erect and firm upon its base ?”

The disease of government, he observed, was a repletion : the over-feeding of the stomach had destroyed the vigour of the limbs. He had long ascertained the nature of the disorder, and the specific remedy : but had restrained his thoughts, partly from want of personal importance, partly from the effects of his own disposition ; he was not naturally an economist, and was cautious of experiment, even to timidity. But the temper of the times was favourable to reformation ; there was a dawn of hope ; and though the powers of a ministry were best calculated to give effect to such a plan, the present auspicious moment was not to be neglected. He would not yet disclose all the particulars of his plan, he would reserve the means of executing it, and state only the end, objects, and limits.

He intended a regulation, substantial as far as it extended, which would give to the public service two hundred thousand pounds a year, and annihilate a portion of influence equal to the places of fifty members of parliament. Such a reform was more to be

relied on for removing the means of corruption than any devices to prevent its operation: an abrogation of the sources of influence would render disqualifications unnecessary; but while the sources remained, nothing could prevent their operation on parliament. No other radical attempt at reformation need, however, be impeded: the present plan could not make a careless minister an economist; but it would be a check on the worst, and a benefit to the best.

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He then detailed the limits of his scheme: the first was founded on the rules of justice; nothing should be invaded which was held by a private individual under a legal tenure. The next limit was in the rules of equity and mercy: where offices might be suppressed which formed the whole maintenance of innocent people, it was hard, and hardship was a kind of injustice, that they who had been decoyed into particular situations by the prodigality of parliament, should be sacrificed to its repentance. The removals therefore embraced in his intended plan, would fall almost entirely on those who held offices from which they might be removed to accommodate ministerial arrangements, and surely the accommodation of the public was a cause of removal full as important as the convenience of any administration, or the displeasure of any minister. The third limit would be found in the service of the state: no employment, really and substantially useful to the public, should be abolished or abridged of its lawful and accustomed emoluments. The fourth limit would be, to leave a fund sufficiently solid for the reward of service or merit; and the fifth, to reserve to the crown an ample and liberal provision for personal satisfaction, and for as much of magnificence as suited the burthened state of the country; perhaps, some might think what he should propose to leave, more than was decent.

However presumptuous his attempt might appear, it was made with humility and integrity: he trusted it would give confidence to the people, and strength to

C H A P. government ; that it would make war vigorous, and
XXXVII. peace really refreshing and recruiting.

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Several members of opposition (and no others spoke) bestowed high encomiums on the plan of Mr. Burke. He had mentioned, with some expressions of shame, that a scheme of economical reform had been first mentioned in the Upper House and not in the Commons, whose peculiar office was the guardianship of the national treasure. Mr. Fox declared he was just come from the House of Lords, where the first men of abilities and public estimation in the kingdom were libelling the Commons. Every instance they gave (and many strong ones were given) of uncorrected abuse with regard to public money, was a libel on the House of Commons. Every argument they used for the reduction of prodigal expense (and their arguments were various and unanswerable) was a libel on the House of Commons. Every one of their statements on the luxuriant growth of corrupt influence (and it never was half so flourishing) was a libel on the House of Commons. The same principle which promoted private friendship, he observed, created the affection of the people to their sovereign, but that must cease when his interests became totally dissociated from theirs. Could any thing be more unseemly, than to find, that when landed estates were sunk one-fifth in value, rents unpaid, manufactures languishing, and trade expiring ; burthen upon burthen, piled on the fainting people ; when men of all ranks were obliged to retrench the most innocent luxuries ; and even such as were rather grown by habit into a kind of decent convenience, and draw themselves up into the limits of an austere and pinching economy ; — that just the beginning of that time should be chosen, that a period of such general distress should be snatched at, as the lucky moment of complimenting the crown with an addition of no less than a hundred thousand pounds a year ; that the King should rise in splendour on the very ruins of the

country, and amidst its desolations should flourish with increased opulence, amidst the cries of his afflicted subjects; it was something monstrous, something unnatural: an outrage to the sense; an insult on the sufferings of the nation.

During the Christmas recess, a public meeting of the freeholders of Yorkshire, voted a petition to the House of Commons, representing the circumstances of the war, the accumulation of taxes, and the rapid decline of trade, manufactures and rents; although rigid frugality was become indispensably necessary, many individuals enjoyed sinecure places, or efficient offices with exorbitant emoluments, and pensions unmerited by public services, whence the crown had acquired a great unconstitutional influence, portending destruction to the liberties of the country. The true and legitimate end of government, was not the emolument of any individual, but the welfare of the community; and as the national purse was peculiarly entrusted to the House of Commons, it would be injurious to the rights and property of the people, and derogatory from the honour and dignity of Parliament, to grant any additional sum of public money beyond the existing taxes, until effectual measures were taken for inquiring into, and correcting the gross abuses in the expenditure of public money, reducing all exorbitant emoluments, rescinding and abolishing all sinecure places and unmerited pensions, and appropriating the produce to the necessities of the state.

A permanent committee of sixty-one individuals was appointed to carry on the *necessary correspondence* for effectually promoting the object of the petition, and to prepare a *plan of association* on legal and constitutional grounds, and support a *laudable reform* and other measures conduced to restore the freedom of parliament.

This example was followed by many other counties and cities throughout the kingdom: public meetings were convened by advertisement; violent

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30th Dec.
Meeting and
petition of
the free-
holders of
Yorkshire.

Correspond-
ing commit-
tees ap-
pointed.

The example
of Yorkshire
generally
followed.

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10th and
12th Feb.
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London
committee
formed.

harangues were made against the proceedings and persons of the administration, corresponding committees were appointed, and the transactions were only marked by some slight shades of variation in the degrees of violence.

The city of London, though somewhat late, proceeded with equal ardour; their vote, beside establishing a corresponding committee, ordered the publication of their resolves in all the public papers. To those acquainted with the mode of managing such transactions, it is well known, that the names of multitudes may be easily obtained to petitions, and that the overbearing proceedings usual at public meetings, will prevent the attendance of almost all but those who assemble for the purpose of carrying particular measures by means of abusive declamation and clamour, or of giving the colour of general approbation to certain measures and resolutions. In some counties, particularly Sussex and Hertfordshire, protests were signed by a great majority of the most respectable of the nobility and landed interest, in direct contradiction to the resolutions of the county meetings. In many other places, counter-meetings were held, counter-petitions framed, and protests subscribed, but the system, combination and popularity of the associators seemed to prevail, every endeavour having been used to turn into ridicule the exertions of their opponents.^a

Burke intro-
duces his
plan of re-
form.
11th Feb.
His cele-
brated
speech.

The petitions were daily presented to the House of Commons, and increased the public expectations which the eloquence and reputation of Mr. Burke had excited, when he introduced his plan of reform, with an apology for the undertaking: it was calculated, he said, to effect a considerable reduction of improper expense, a conversion of unprofitable titles into productive estate, and to repress that corrupt influence

^a See the details of these meetings, copies of the petitions, reports of the speeches and motions in the Remembrancer, vol. ix. at the places referred to in the Index.

which was itself the perennial spring of all prodigality and disaster ; but he advanced to it with a tremor which shook him to the inmost fibre of his frame ; he anticipated all the odium attending the exercise of that necessary virtue, parsimony ; and all the resentment of individuals, whose emoluments, patronage and objects of pursuit must be diminished. He was not inclined to depreciate the successes or undervalue the finances of the country ; the one might be unlimited, the other unfathomable, as they were represented. Taxing was an easy business. Any projector could contrive new impositions, any bungler add to the old ; but it was unwise to set no bounds to imposts but the patience of those who were to pay. Resources were not augmented by waste, nor would frugality lessen riches.

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He strongly pressed on the House the example of France, which he said reminded him of the observation of Pyrrhus, on reconnoitring the Roman camp ; “ these barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline.” In the proceedings of the French King, there was nothing of the character and genius of arbitrary finance ; none of the bold frauds of bankrupt power ; none of the wild struggles and plunges of despotism in distress ; no lopping off from the capital of debt ; no suspension of interest ; no robbery under the name of loan ; no raising the value, no debasing the substance of the coin. Nothing of Louis the XIVth or Louis the XVth. On the contrary, by the very hands of arbitrary power, and in the very midst of war and confusion, rose a regular methodical system of public credit ; a fabric was laid on the natural and solid foundations of trust and confidence among men ; and rising by fair gradations, order over order, according to the just rules of symmetry and art. He expatiated on this topic at great length, exhorting the House not to let economy be the only French fashion which England refused to copy.

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An eminent criterion for distinguishing a wise government from a weak and improvident administration was this ; “ well to know the best time and manner of yielding what it is impossible to keep.” Some would argue against every desire of reformation on the principles of a criminal prosecution, and justify their adherence to a pernicious system, by alleging it was not of their contrivance, that it was an inheritance of absurdity derived from their ancestors, and by making out a long and unbroken pedigree of mismanagers who had gone before them ; but there was a time when the hoary head of inveterate abuse would neither draw reverence nor obtain protection, when a minister, by impeding reform, would make the faults of his office become his own. Early reformations were amicable arrangements with a friend in power ; late reformations, terms imposed on a conquered enemy ; the former were made in cool blood, the latter under a state of inflammation. But as it was the interest of government that reform should be early, it was the interest of the people that it should be temperate ; because it would then be permanent, and contain a principle of growth. In hot reformations, in what men, more zealous than considerate, called *making clear work*, the whole was generally so crude, so harsh, so indigested ; mixed with so much imprudence, and so much injustice ; so contrary to the whole course of human nature, and human institutions, that the very people who were most eager, were the very first to grow disgusted at what they had done. Then some part of the abdicated grievance was recalled from its exile, in order to become a corrective of the correction. Then the abuse assumed the credit and popularity of a reform. Thus the very idea of purity and disinterestedness in politics would fall into disrepute and be considered as the vision of hot and inexperienced men ; and thus disorders would become incurable, not by the virulence of their own

quality, but by the unapt and violent nature of the remedies. We must no more make haste to be rich by parsimony than by intemperate acquisition.

He objected to a place tax, as a measure not calculated to produce, but prevent reformation ; a composition to stay inquiry ; a fine paid by mismanagement for the renewal of its lease. Such a measure could never be proper till useless offices were abrogated, and those which remained, classed according to their respective degrees of importance, so as to admit an equal rule of taxation, and the civil list revenue so managed that the minister should no longer have the power of repaying with a private, whatever was taken by a public hand.

Unwilling to proceed in an arbitrary manner, in any particular which tended to change the settled state of things, he had laid down general principles, which could not be debauched or corrupted by interest or caprice, and by them he regulated his proceedings : These were,

First, The abolition of all jurisdictions contributing rather to expense, oppression, and corrupt influence, than to the administration of justice.

Second, The disposal of all public estates which were more subservient to the purposes of vexing, overawing, and influencing the tenants, and to the expenses of receipt and management, than of benefit to the revenue.

Third, That offices bringing more charge than proportional advantage to the state, or which might be engrafted on others, ought, in the first case, to be taken away ; and in the second consolidated.

Fourth, The abolition of all offices tending to obstruct the operations, or enfeeble the foresight of the general superintendant of finance.

Fifth, The establishment of an order in payments, which would prevent partiality, and regulate receipt not by the importunity of the claimant, but by the utility of his office.

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CHAP. Sixth, The reduction of every establishment to certainty.

XXXVII. 1780. Seventh, The dissolution of all subordinate treasuries.

First, with regard to the sovereign jurisdictions, he observed, that England was not, as a mere cursory examiner would suppose, a solid, compact, uniform system of monarchy ; it was formerly a heptarchy, now a sort of pentarchy. The King, like a chief performer in an itinerant dramatic company, acted not only the principal, but all the subordinate personages in the play. Mr. Burke exemplified this comparison, by shewing the King of England in the various characters of King, Prince of Wales, Duke of Lancaster, Earl of Chester, Count Palatine of Lancaster, and Duke of Cornwall.

In each of these principalities, duchies, palatinates, was a regular establishment of considerable expense and most domineering influence ; the apparatus of a kingdom and the formality and charge of the Exchequer of Great Britain, for collecting the rents of a country squire. Cornwall, which was the best, furnished no exception from the general rule : the duchy and county palatine of Lancaster did not yield more on an average than four thousand pounds a year, and it was doubtful if Wales and Chester made any returns. Wales had eight judges, while all England had but twelve ; an exchequer like the rest, according to the very best and most authentic absurdity of form, and there were in all of them a hundred more difficult trifles and laborious fooleries, which served no other purpose than to keep alive corrupt hope and servile dependance. The duchy of Lancaster was not worth four thousand pounds a year to the revenue, but worth forty or fifty thousand to influence. After entering into an historical account of the annexation of the different fiefs to the crown, and shewing that neither dignity nor family attachment could give the King the least partiality for them,

he proposed to unite the five principalities to the crown, and to its ordinary jurisdiction; to abolish all those offices which produced only an useless and chargeable separation from the people; to make compensation to all who did not hold their offices at the pleasure of the crown; to extinguish vexatious titles by a short act of limitation; to sell the unprofitable estates which supported useless jurisdictions, and turn the tenant-right into a fee on moderate terms, beneficial both to the tenant and the state. The judicial economy of the duchies should fall into the county administrations, and with respect to Wales, he had doubts whether to add a fifth judge in each of the courts at Westminster, or to suppress five only of the Welch Judges, and let the remaining three perform the business.

On the second head, he proposed to sell all the forest lands, extinguishing the rights of vert and venison, and with them the expensive office of surveyor-general, and two chief justices in eyre, with all their train of dependants: from these sales, only an inconsiderable profit would arise, the chief benefit would be drawn from improved agriculture and increased population.

Professing to approach the civil list, the third division of his subject, with the awe and reverence incident to a young physician who prescribes for the disorders of his parent, Mr. Burke satirized, with unrivalled wit and humour, the different establishments and expenses of the royal household, formed on the Gothic system of feudalism and purveyance, and still retained, though the royal household had shrunk into the polished littleness of modern elegance and personal accommodation. "It has evaporated," he said, "from the gross concrete into an essence and rectified spirit of expense, where you have tons of ancient pomp in a vial of modern luxury." Pursuing the same mode of description and reasoning, through various other objects, he made propositions,

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CHAP. the sum of which was, as enumerated by himself, to
 XXXVII. take away the whole *establishment of detail* in the
1780. household; the *treasurer*; the *comptroller*; the *cofferer of the household*; the *treasurer of the chamber*; the *master of the household*; and the whole *board of green cloth*; and a vast number of subordinate offices in the department of the *steward of the household*; the whole establishment of the *great wardrobe*; the *removing wardrobe*; the *jewel office*; the *robes*; the *board of works*; and almost the whole charge of the *civil branch of the board of ordnance*; then, he observed, the public might begin to breathe. He went on proposing regulations in the offices of paymaster of the forces and treasurer of the navy, by reducing them from banks or treasuries to mere offices of administration. All the money formerly impressed into these offices, he would have impressed into the Bank of England, to which he would also transfer the charge of the mint, and the remittances to the troops on foreign service. He recommended the abolition of the office of paymaster of pensions, and reduction of the pension list to sixty thousand pounds a year. If any case of extraordinary merit should emerge, he would leave an opening for an address of either house of parliament; to all other demands, the firm though reluctant answer must be, "the public is poor." He did not mean to abrogate any existing pension, or even to inquire into the merits of the possessor; the discretionary power vested in the crown was liable to perversion, and he would limit the quantity of power that might be so abused. The pensions granted within seven years amounted, on an average, to a hundred thousand pounds a year: by his regulation an annual saving of forty thousand pounds would at some future period be made to the public, and it were better to let it fall naturally, than tear it crude and unripe from the stalk. The public he knew expected a considerable reform in the great patent offices of the exchequer; he thought the profits enormous, and proposed limit-

ing the great auditor to three thousand pounds, the inferior auditors, and other principal officers, to fifteen hundred pounds a year each ; but though he considered them as sinecures, he would not consent to their abolition ; they were given for life, and it was fit the crown should have the power of granting pensions, out of the reach of its own caprices, — the possibility of conferring some favours which, while received as rewards, do not operate as corruption. What an unseemly spectacle would it afford, what a disgrace would it be to the commonwealth that suffered such things, to see the hopeful son of a meritorious minister, begging his bread at the door of that treasury, from whence his father dispensed the economy of an empire, and promoted the happiness and glory of his country ? Why should he be obliged to prostrate his honour, and submit his principles at the levee of some proud favourite, shouldered and thrust aside by every impudent pretender, on the very spot where a few days before he saw himself adored ? Obliged to cringe to the author of the calamities of his house, and to kiss the hands that are red with his father's blood ? These things are unfit. They are intolerable.

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Conceiving himself bound to give as full and clear reasons for stopping as for proceeding in the course of reformation, Mr. Burke laid down some indisputable political axioms, no less honourable to his judgment and sagacity than his candour. He did not think the great efficient officers of the state overpaid. What would be just remuneration for one kind of labour, full encouragement for one species of talents, was fraud and discouragement to others. Even if men could be found willing to serve in high situations without salary, they ought not to be permitted : ordinary service must be secured by the motives to ordinary integrity ; that state which lays its foundation in rare and heroic virtues, will be sure to have its superstructure in the basest profligacy and

CHAP. corruption. An honourable and fair profit is the best security against avarice and rapacity; as in all things else a lawful and regulated enjoyment is the best security against debauchery and excess.

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It would be expected, that in giving reasons for limiting himself in the reduction of employments, he should advert to those which seemed of *eminent utility* in the state, the officers attendant on the person of the King: these he determined not to lessen in number or emolument, as they prevented the court from being deserted by all the nobility in the kingdom; he proposed, however, to abolish the keepers of buck-hounds, stag-hounds, fox-hounds, and harriers; they answered no purpose of utility or splendour, and it was unfit for noblemen to be keepers of dogs, even though they were the King's dogs. He concluded this part of his plan by proposing the abolition of the office of the third secretary of state, or secretary of state for the colonies; and the board of trade and plantations; the office was so useless, that Lord Suffolk held it long after he was wholly disabled by bodily infirmities, and it continued vacant a year after his decease. The board of trade he described as a mere job in its original formation and regeneration, costing the public nearly forty thousand pounds a year, without the least utility or advantage; its functions might be performed, as Irish business of the same nature, by the council, with a reference to the attorney and solicitor-general.

He next proceeded to the subject of arrangements, a part of his plan on which he principally relied for bringing up and securing the whole, by fixing an invariable order in all payments from which the first lord of the treasury should not, on any pretence, depart. He divided the civil list payments into nine classes; the first was occupied by the judges; the last, by the commissioners of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer: the reason for assigning each specific position was ably given, and that for

placing the first lord of the treasury and his colleagues at the bottom of the list, was to protect all the other classes against the effects of profusion and mismanagement ; on this part of his subject, Mr. Burke expatiated in a vein of humorous raillery, enlivened by poignant wit, and diversified with solid argument.

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He then presented to the House five bills for carrying into effect the objects indicated in his speech, though he acknowledged he had not the frantic presumption to suppose his plan contained all the public had a right to expect in the great work of reformation. He described the situation of the House of Commons with regard to the people, under the allegory of a jealous husband, and a wife whose conduct, if not stained with guilt, was at least tainted with levity. "Let us return," he said, "to our legitimate home, and all jars and all quarrels will be lost in embraces. Let the commons in parliament assembled, be one and the same thing with the commons at large. The distinctions that are made to separate us, are unnatural and wicked contrivances. Let us identify, let us incorporate ourselves with the people. Let us cut all the cabals, and snap the chains which tie us to an unfaithful shore, and enter the friendly harbour, that shoots far out into the main its moles and jetties to receive us. 'War with the world, and peace with our constituents.' Be this our motto, and our principle. Then, indeed, we shall be truly great."^b

The progress of the inquiry into this plan engaged the attention of the House during a great part of the session ; the debates on various clauses of the bills were animated, and replete with unusual wit and

Vote for
abolishing
the board of
trade.

^b I have given an unusually copious extract of this celebrated speech, which is entitled to serious and frequent perusal, as containing the sentiments of an eminent statesman, on many of the important topics connected with reform and economy. The zeal of party, and the state of the times, gave birth to projects not altogether consistent with propriety, or commensurate to the dignity of the subject, but the general axioms, and the political principles which extend to the whole system of government, are remarkable for their wisdom, temperance, and justice. The speech at length is in Burke's Works, 4to. vol. ii. p. 115.

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eloquence ; but the only result of the scheme was a vote for abolishing the board of trade, which fell a victim to the wit of Mr. Burke, directed against some topics urged in its defence, much more than to its own want of utility, cumbrousness of expense, or extent of patronage. The lords of trade were but eight, the net produce of their salaries between seven and eight hundred pounds a year ; and their labours were comprised in two thousand three hundred folio volumes, a circumstance which Mr. Burke ridiculed with inconceivable effect ; but allowing that each of these folios should contain the fair proportion of dullness, still it could not be denied that many sane principles were discussed, many important facts authenticated, many sagacious projects recommended, and many erroneous speculations exposed. Perhaps the period when this board was subsequently abolished, was the very moment when its active functions could have been most beneficially exerted : when commerce was about to receive a new impulse, and unprecedented extension ; encouraged by circumstances never foreseen, yet embarrassed by litigations, involved in the discordant interest of rivals, and encumbered with questions both legal and political, respecting charters, monopoly, and paper credit, requiring the utmost calmness in investigation and firmness in decision.^c

8th Feb.
Commission
of accounts
appointed.

While Mr. Burke's project of economy and reform was yet depending, several auxiliary propositions were made in both Houses ; among the most prominent of which was the appointment of a commission of accounts, in conformity to the practice in the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, and almost regularly from the second year after the Revolution to the year 1715. This subject was introduced to the

^c The reader whose curiosity shall lead him to pursue the train of the debates on Burke's plan, in Debrett's Parliamentary Register, vol. xvii. will find enough of wisdom, wit, and ingenious argument to repay him for the time employed. The most instructive and entertaining debates will be found at pp. 127, 156, 195, 228, 237, 254, 295, 374, and 588. — See also an account of this motion in Gibbon's posthumous Works, vol. i. p. 156, et seq.

House of Lords by the Earl of Shelburne, in pursu-
ance of a notice he had given before the Christmas
recess. In a long and able speech, he accused the
minister of deluding the public in respect to affairs
of finance, misappropriating the sinking fund, mis-
using the votes of credit, and extending to an im-
proper degree the confidence of the bank. He re-
viewed the mode of voting army extraordinaries,
and descanted with severity on the supposed frauds
of contractors: his project embraced also many of
the topics included in Burke's plan, which was not
yet submitted to the House. It was answered that
the bills passed in the reigns of William and Anne
had been discontinued, because they were found to
answer no good purpose, and owed their origin and
existence to party. After the firm establishment of
the house of Hanover on the throne, when faction,
tumult, and sedition were crushed, and the continual
fluctuation of counsels which distracted and per-
plexed the two preceding reigns, gave place to stea-
diness and stability, the annual law for examining,
controlling, and stating the public accounts was dis-
continued. The debate, which was very long, and
embraced many other topics of enforcement and ob-
jection, ended by a rejection of the motion^d; thirty-
five peers subscribed a protest.

On the reception of Mr. Burke's propositions,
Colonel Barré suggested the necessity of some ad-
dition; he did not think the reform sufficiently ex-
tensive, which permitted men of overgrown wealth
to hold unreduced offices in the exchequer, reaping
advantages from the wars and calamities of their
country. The extraordinaries of the army struck
him with surprise; and all his efforts had failed to
procure satisfactory explanations. He therefore pro-
posed, on some future day, to move for a commis-
sion of accounts. Lord North heartily coincided;
he was ever ready to receive beneficial propositions

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^d 101 to 55.

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from either side of the House, considered the course of the exchequer inimical to speedy and effectual controul, and should, for the sake of clearness and precision in the public accounts, sanction the measure of a committee, though convinced it would be impossible to reduce all expenses to an estimate.

2d March.

Colonel Barré, after being thus supported by the minister, and giving him credit for the liberality and manliness of his sentiments, felt no small mortification when Lord North gave notice of his intention to move for leave to bring in a bill, appointing a commission, not only to inquire into past expenditure, but into the current accounts. The minister was chiefly impelled to undertake this measure, by the observations which some members had made, respecting his declaration on Colonel Barré's notice of motion, that it was not sincere, but a mere parliamentary trick ; an attempt to gain momentary popularity by affecting readiness to do what in reality he did not intend. As an indisputable proof of his real sentiments, he said, he should bring in the bill now suggested, and to obviate all objections respecting the nomination of a committee, from one or the other side of the House, should propose for that purpose, men who were not members. Colonel Barré protesting that he did not believe the history of parliament afforded an instance of a similar transaction, declared himself ready to forego all complaints, and if the minister really meant a benefit to the country, he would cheerfully concur and rejoice in it, though the merit due to him should be attributed to another. The bill was however opposed with considerable warmth, during its whole progress. It was decried as tending to create new places in the gift of the crown with large salaries, extensive influence, and new patronage, branching out into the lower departments of clerks, accountants, and messengers, at the very time that the people were petitioning for reduction of expenses, and contraction of influence. The nomination of commissioners occasioned

a spirited debate. Sir Guy Carleton being the first named, many ludicrous animadversions were made on his change of employ from the truncheon to the pen. No part of the project escaped acrimonious censure ; yet the bill was passed ; gentlemen of the first talent and respectability were appointed commissioners^e, and their reports presented to the House, and given to the public in various forms, are highly honourable to their industry and ability, and an excellent body of political information.

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1st May.

Among other popular measures recommended in Mr. Burke's speech on introducing his plan of reform, were the revival of the bill of last year, for excluding contractors from sitting in parliament, and that for suspending the votes of revenue officers, which was formerly moved by Mr. Dowdeswell. Sir Philip Jennings Clerke availed himself of the intimation, and re-introduced his former unsuccessful bill, which passed the House of Commons almost unopposed, and apparently unnoticed. In the House of Lords, it met with strong and effectual opposition : to exclude tax-gatherers, it was said, might be reasonable and just, as they might be needy and liable to corruption : but it was incompatible with justice to exclude merchants of great property and respectability, merely because they happened to be engaged fairly and openly in contracts with government : it would be unjust to deprive individuals of their right, without proof their having abused it, an illiberal and cruel stigma on a respectable body of men, and a mean compliance with popular prejudice, unworthy the House of Lords. Besides, the regulation could not in all cases be effectual ; contracts for secret expeditions must be secretly made ; and the twenty days notice required by this bill, could not possibly be given, when a sudden expedition was thought necessary. In favour of the measure the usual ground was taken, the prodigality, ignorance and

Bills for excluding contractors and suspending the votes of revenue officers rejected.

24th Feb.

14th Apr.

^e Sir Guy Carleton, Thomas Anguish, Arthur Piggot, Richard Neave, Samuel Beachrost, and George Drummond, Esquires.

C H A P. XXXVII. imposition which characterized the parties to modern contracts were displayed in the highest colours ; and it was argued, that as the bill affected the Commons alone, its rejection by the Lords would be an insult on that body ; such had been the reasoning of Lord Mansfield on the Middlesex election, and if applicable then, it was equally cogent in the present instance. The rejection of the bill ^f occasioned a protest to which twenty-six peers signed their names as concurring partially or totally in the component articles.

Mr. Crewe introduced the bill for preventing revenue officers from voting, which was rejected on the second reading ^g : the arguments were not new or important.

Account of places.

All these debates and many others which engaged the attention of the House, had constant reference to the petitions which were daily received, and continually expatiated on the popular text, the necessity of economy, and the increasing influence of the crown. As pensions and places were the principal objects embraced in this plan of censure, Sir George Savile obtained, without opposition, an order that an account of all places, and the salaries annexed to them, should be laid before the House ; but when he proceeded to require an account of all pensions, whether paid at the exchequer or out of the privy purse ; for life, years, or at pleasure, the motion was strenuously resisted.

15th Feb.

And of pensions paid at the exchequer laid before the House.

21st Feb.

This debate was interrupted by the indisposition of the speaker, which occasioned a short suspension of business. When the sittings of parliament were resumed, Lord North moved an amendment, by which the pensions payable at the exchequer only should be published. He exposed the delusion practised on the public in stating the pretended amount of the pension list, and affirmed that, deducting the monies paid under that denomination for real services, and as actual salaries, and the land tax on pensions, which returned

into the coffers of the state, the whole sum did not amount to fifty thousand pounds a year, being ten thousand less than was proposed to be allowed by Mr. Burke's economical scheme. The debate terminated in a violent uproar, occasioned by an unwarrantable personality of Colonel Barré, who said, not one Englishman had risen to support the minister; his principal defenders were, the attorney-general (Mr. Wedderburne), and the lord advocate of Scotland (Mr. Dundas). When the ferment occasioned by this national remark subsided, the amendment of the minister was carried by a majority of two only.^h

The same subject was introduced to the Upper House by the Earl of Effingham, in a motion for a list of all pensions enjoyed by peers of parliament: the debate was conducted with some warmth; the state of the Scotch peerage was severely animadverted on, and ably defended. The proposition was lost by a considerable majority.

In all the debates of this session, the most licentious invectives were indulged; and it appeared the wish of political opponents to urge parliamentary altercation to unpardonable extremes of personal animosity. In consequence of some words spoken on the first day of the session, and misrepresented in a newspaper report, Mr. Adam engaged in a duel with Mr. Fox, and wounded him slightly in the body.

On the removal of Lord Carmarthen from the lord lieutenancy of the East Riding of Yorkshire, and of the Earl of Pembroke from that of Wilts, Lord Shelburne moved for an address to ascertain the advisers of those measures.^k In the course of his speech the Earl reflected in contemptuous terms on the appointment of Mr. Fullarton to the command of a new-raised regiment, with the temporary rank of lieutenant-colonel, mentioning him as a *commis.*^l

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10th Mar.

Duels be-
tween mem-
bers of par-
liament.

29th Mar.
1779.

6th Mar.
1780.

20th Mar.

^h 188 to 186. ⁱ 51 to 24. ^k It was negatived, 92 to 39.

^l He had been employed under Lord Stormont in the embassy to Paris.

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Colonel Fullarton, with a warmth which the occasion excused, though it may not be justified, vindicated himself, and highly resented the attack. Another duel was the consequence, in which Lord Shelburne was wounded. Sir James Lowther made the transaction the subject of a conversation (for there was no motion), in the House of Commons, by declaring if questions of a public nature were tried by appeals to the sword, the British parliament would soon resemble a Polish diet. Mr. Adam explained, in the most handsome manner, his difference with Mr. Fox, but the discussion produced no consequences.^m

Debates on
the raising of
volunteer
regiments.

5th April.

Colonel Fullarton incurred this attack in consequence of having raised a regiment for the service of government, an effort of zeal which gave peculiar offence to opposition, and which they omitted no opportunity of decrying. In a debate on the army extraordinaries, Mr. Fox, with great bitterness censured the manner of obtaining these levies, and of giving and withholding preferment: he animadverted with severity on the appointment of the honourable George North, eldest son of Lord North, to the command of the Cinque Port regiment, on the promotion of Colonel Fullarton, and particularly on the conduct of Colonel Holroyd (now Lord Sheffield), which he had totally misconceived. The attack, however, produced an explanation highly honourable: Colonel Holroyd replied with great spirit that the members of opposition, far from being willing to assist the public cause, could not repress their indignation against those who endeavoured to be useful, even at the moment of such an alarming crisis. When the French and Spanish fleets were off the coast, he had offered to raise light troops without expence to the country, which he did in a very short time, and the circumstance it was intended to arraign, far from being advantageous to

^m Addresses of congratulation were voted by many of the corresponding committees to Lord Shelburne, and some pretty plainly insinuated, that he owed his danger to the resentment of government at the part he had taken in behalf of the people.

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him, was very much the contrary, and only beneficial to the service, and the officers who all came from old regiments. No situation in the army could be more agreeable to him than that he already held in the Sussex militia: nor could any remuneration in the power of government compensate for the neglect of his private affairs, and the desertion of his home: a home which he had scarcely seen since the commencement of the war. His contempt for such insinuations would have kept him silent, had not the respect due to parliament rendered some explanation necessary; no man in that House, or in England, was more independent in principle, disposition, or situation. He was not personally known to any member of administration, but in the present crisis, he considered it his duty to support the servants of the public against those who were endeavouring to *take the government by storm.* This happy and just expression was often afterward quoted with undiminished effect.

An altercation of more political importance occurred between the minister and the speaker of the House of Commons. Sir Fletcher Norton had long been dissatisfied at the disappointment of some expectations of aggrandizement, and had in consequence formed an intimate connexion with the opposition. The first public display of this sentiment occurred in a debate on Mr. Burke's plan of economy. In a former discussion, Mr. Rigby had attempted to establish as a principle, that parliament had no right to inquire into the expenditure of the civil list, and Mr. Fox, having previously secured the opinion of the speaker, took occasion to introduce the subject in a committee, and referred to him for a decision, which was given in direct contradiction to the axiom of administration. If the minister was astonished at this desertion, he was not less surprised at the declaration with which Sir Fletcher Norton accompanied it; that Lord North and he were not friends, nor had any confidential or

13th Mar.
Altercation
between
Lord North
and Sir
Fletcher
Norton.

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friendly intercourse subsisted between them, since the time when, in fulfilling his duty, he had conveyed the sentiments of parliament to the foot of the throne; a recent transaction rendered it necessary for him and the noble lord to stand on the most unequivocal terms. Being pressed to explain the last insinuation, he stated, that at the pressing request of the Duke of Grafton, communicated through Mr. Rigby, he had consented, on the death of Sir John Cust, to accept the speaker's chair; but his compliance was accompanied with an express reservation, that an opening should be kept for his return to Westminster Hall, on the first eligible vacancy. Although this promise was positively made, and although he was well entitled to a preference from his long standing at the bar, high professional character, and being the only lawyer at that time in the cabinet, he had now the mortification to find that a negotiation was carrying on to prevail on Sir William de Grey, the chief justice of the common pleas, to resign, and place the attorney-general in his room. This he considered an injury, as the individual thus preferred was not by length of practice, or professional reputation, qualified to impede his claims. The minister denied that he was responsible for promises made by his predecessors in office; and after a long personal altercation between Lord North and the speaker, Mr. Wedderburne with polished wit, and irrefragable argument, showed the arrogance and absurdity of Sir Fletcher's pretensions. He said it was disgracing the profession, degrading his character, and betraying the interest of the country, to seek sinecure emolument as a compensation for quitting a practice in which he could secure honourable independency; yet the speaker did not hesitate to avow, that he had received the most valuable sinecure he enjoyed, (the chief justiceship in Eyre,) for transacting the business of the privy-council. But it was not true, as he asserted, that there was then no person of the profession belonging to that board; Sir Eardly Wilmot, late chief justice of the

common pleas, Mr. Sewell, master of the rolls, Lord Mansfield, Lord Bathurst, the chancellor, and all the customary law officers, had seats in council. With respect to himself, he was as ready to allow as the speaker was to assert, that in point of character, standing pretensions, and education, he was not equally with him qualified for a common law court; but since Sir Fletcher had quitted Westminster Hall, to slide first into an ample sinecure, and next into the chair of that house, he could not be offended if many who continued to labour with industry and assiduity in the field he had deserted, looked forward also to the rewards of their labour, and the gratification of their ambition. He considered the office of judge too delicate in its nature and execution, to be the object of solicitation; nor would he be so forgetful of propriety as to make personal differences matter of public complaint; so lost to decorum, as to call on the House to interfere in a private negotiation; he would never so humble his own character as to make a disagreement with a minister the ground of his opinion, on a great and important political regulation. From this period Sir Fletcher Norton joined the cry of opposition, and spoke with all the fervour of party on the influence of the crown, the abuses of prerogative, and the rights of the people: a strong illustration of Sir Robert Walpole's recipe for making a patriot.ⁿ

During these violent altercations, petitions were daily laid before the House, in introducing which many members used language showing a firm reliance on an extraneous interference, which should regulate by terror the deliberations of parliament. Sir George Savile, on presenting the York petition, said the ministry would not dare to refuse hearing it, though the prayer might be eluded by artifice and juggling, yet

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Numerous petitions.

8th Feb.
Intemperate language in introducing them.

ⁿ "Patriots," he said; "spring up like mushrooms; I could raise fifty of them within four-and-twenty hours. I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an unanswerable or an insolent demand, and up starts a patriot." See Coxe's Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole, quarto, vol. i. p. 652.

C H A P. if parliament mocked the people, the people would
 XXXVII. learn not to respect parliament. The petition was not
 1780. presented by men with swords and muskets, nor insti-
 tuted by a few incendiaries, operating on simple and
 credulous individuals in hedge ale-houses: it was
 moved in an assembly of upward of six hundred gen-
 tlemen, in a hall, the walls of which enclosed more
 property than the walls of the House of Commons.
 13th Mar. Mr. Fox used language equally bold in offering the
 5th April. Westminster petition; and Sir James Lowther, in
 presenting that from Cumberland, said, “if the
 House should turn a deaf ear to so respectable a
 body of subscribers, they would do themselves justice
 by withholding the taxes. Ministers might think to
 dragoon them into the payment, but such measures
 of coercion would be attended with consequences too
 horrid for even them to venture. If a legal course of
 enforcement were attempted, let administration re-
 flect who would be the juries, and consider whether
 they were likely to obtain a single verdict.” Against
 several of these petitions, protests and counter-peti-
 tions were presented, which called down all the ve-
 hemence of opposition. On the protest against the
 5th Mar. Hereford petition, Mr. Barrow petulantly observed,
 that it had been mostly signed by the gentry at and
 about the cathedral, with the bishop at their head. So
 long as these people were permitted to batten in idle-
 ness on the labour and industry of their fellow sub-
 jects, they would do well to conduct themselves with
 moderation and decency, lest the rage of reformation
 should forcibly inculcate those lessons. They en-
 joyed sinecure places, and were in the receipt of enor-
 mous profits and exorbitant emoluments; it was
 therefore matter of surprise that they were not in-
 cluded in the letter, as they manifestly were in the
 spirit of the petitions. He was adverse to partialities;
 and though full and adequate rewards for services
 were but equitable, yet a parcel of idle, luxurious,
 proud and overbearing fellows sleeping in their stalls,

and supported by the toil, sweat and laborious industry of the middling and lower ranks of people, was an evil as repugnant to natural justice and sound policy, as it was disgraceful and injurious to true religion. The clergy were no less virulently and indecently abused by Mr. Turner, who called them friends of arbitrary power, enemies of the free constitution which fed and protected them, and dangerous engines of state in the hands of an ambitious prince or wicked administration. During the reigns of James I. and that obstinate and perverse tyrant Charles his son, they had preached the most scandalous and shameful doctrines, and were the chief cause of the fatal end of that tyrant, whom their successors still affected to deify. They still propagated the same dangerous doctrines in their writings and discourses, and there was no foundation on which arbitrary power could be erected, equal to a standing army and a dependent church.

The efforts used to enforce the adoption of measures consistent with the petitions, were conformable to the violence of language which accompanied their introduction. Sir George Savile intimated, that, until the petitioners received some assurance of relief, it would be advisable to vote the loan piece-meal, according to the requisitions of the public service; and when the committee brought up the report of ways and means, a motion was made for deferring it till the day after that appointed for discussing the petitions, but the proposition was feebly supported, and rejected by a large majority.

The important day destined for discussing the petitions, was anticipated with eager expectation, and met with all the zeal and all the address of party. A meeting of the inhabitants of Westminster was convened by direction of the corresponding committee, a report from that body read and descanted on by Mr. Fox, who was supported by the Dukes of

6th April.
Discussion
of the peti-
tions.

CHAP. XXXVII. Devonshire and Portland, and many other anti-ministerial leaders. Government foreseeing the effect of this manœuvre in over-awing the proceedings of the legislature, drew forth the military, and stationed a considerable body in the neighbourhood of Westminster Hall.^p A call of the House was also ordered, and petitions continued to be presented till the commencement of the debate. These popular missives amounted to forty, and were subscribed with so many names, that the mass of parchment seemed rather calculated to bury than cover the speaker's table.^q

Mr. Dunning opened the business of the day. Independently of the great objects recommended to the attention of parliament by the petitions, varying according to the particular ideas of the several classes of petitioners, there was one great fundamental point, he observed, on which they all hinged, that of setting limits to, and paring down the increased, dangerous, and alarming influence of the crown, and an economical expenditure of the public money. In one view, both these objects might be consolidated into one principle: if the public money was faithfully applied and frugally expended, that would reduce the influence of the crown; or, if the influence of the crown was restrained within its natural and constitutional limits, it would restore that power which the constitution had vested in the House, of inquiring into and controuling the expenditure of public money. But, in pursuance of the objects held forth and recommended in the petitions, he should divide the principle, and propose some remedy, or frame some resolution, which would serve as a basis on which he

^p This exertion of government was severely arraigned by opposition, and formed the subject of several conversations, and at length of a motion by Sir William Meredith: the debate was exceedingly warm. Burke, in a most violent speech, reproached the Middlesex magistrates as the scum of the earth, and Fox declared that if armed men were thus let loose on the constitutional meetings of the people, all who frequented them must go armed. See Commons debates, 10th and 25th April, and 10th May.

^q The expression in the Annual Register for 1780, p. 165.

might erect a system of measures to answer the purposes and comply with the wishes of the petitioners. He reviewed with great severity the conduct of ministers with respect to Mr. Burke's plan of economy; they had received it with a show of candour, a kind of mock approbation, but afterward declared all the material objects it proposed to attain fundamentally wrong. Colonel Barré's suggestion of a committee of accounts had been, in an uncandid, ungentleman-like manner, snatched out of his hands, and commissioners appointed who were not members of parliament, but mere nominees of the minister. The bill for excluding contractors had passed that House, but ministers and their friends confidently predicted its rejection in the House of Lords, so that all which had been done in consequence of the pile of parchment on the table, containing the sentiments and petitions of above a hundred thousand electors, amounted to no more than the adoption of one single clause of Mr. Burke's bill, which standing thus naked and solitary, was of little or no importance. He trusted, however, that the people of England would resent the insult they sustained, from those who, to oppression and neglect, had added mockery and contempt. The great objects of the petitioners had been resisted in argument, and by the public avowals of the minister and his friends. They had asserted in contradiction to the petitioners, that the influence of the crown was not too extensive, and ought not to be retrenched; and that the House was not competent to inquire into the expenditure of the civil list. To bring these points fairly to issue, he would abstract two propositions from the petitions, short, simple, and calculated to draw forth a direct affirmative or negative. If the committee agreed in them, he should propose real, substantive, practical measures; but should they disagree or dissent, or endeavour to evade or procrastinate, there would be, at once an end of the petitions, and a full answer to the petitioners.

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His first proposition was, “ that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.”

The opponents of this dangerous axiom argued that it was not fairly deduced from the petitions, unsupported by evidence, and of a nature too abstract for the House to decide in the shape of a vote. It tended to no given object, for it did not affect to say, that the influence of the crown was in itself improper, or had been unfairly increased, but made a leap from two isolated assertions to an unfounded conclusion, that the influence ought to be diminished. Lord Nugent observed, that Blackstone and Hume, who were quoted by Mr. Dunning, had said that the influence of the crown began to show itself in 1742 : he sat in parliament before that period, and remembered that similar speculations and clamours had then long prevailed ; he then, and still considered them totally unfounded.

The general events of Lord North’s administration were cited to prove, that by the corrupt influence of the crown he retained his office in opposition to the sense of the nation. His whole business, for a series of years, had been to make excuses and devise expedients ; to find supplies from year to year, without inventing any method in finance, any scheme of supply, comprehensive or permanent. The people would bear taxes, though enormous, when they heard of victories and an extension of commerce and territory ; but were apt to judge of ministers, not from ingenious excuses made for their conduct, either by themselves or others, but from the success that followed their measures. Sir Fletcher Norton also made a long speech, in support of the motion ; affirming the exorbitant power of the crown, and the increase of corrupt influence. If members thought proper to vote the petitions of so many thousands of the people false and unfounded, he wished them joy in the prospect of meeting their constituents.

It was already apparent, from the temper of the House, and the effect of many personal arguments, that the division would be hostile to the wishes of administration ; Mr. Dundas therefore moved, that the chairman should leave the chair ; a proposition which being understood to stifle the inquiry, was ill received, and unsupported.

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Lord North vindicated his own conduct with great ability ; he never had insinuated that his abilities were equal to his situation ; he had always declared his readiness to retire whenever his sovereign and the people should wish it ; but if it were true, as had been asserted, that he was kept in office by the efforts of opposition, he could not but suppose he owed his continuance in place to the exertions of those who had formerly contended against the rights of the people of Great Britain, and were now known to be pursuing measures calculated to subvert the constitution.

After the discussion had been protracted to a great length, Mr. Dundas obtained leave to withdraw his motion for vacating the chair, and to add, as an amendment to the original proposition, the words, "it is now necessary to declare." Mr. Fox, readily acceding to the amendment, enforced the principle of the original motion, by saying that if it was negatived, not only the committee, but the House should never sit again. It appears that the lord advocate's reason for this amendment was founded on a certainty of the superior strength of opposition ; and as his former effort was merely directed to gain time, his present aim was to convert that which was projected as a general assertion, to a temporary declaration, which might at any subsequent period be retracted or disavowed. The amended motion was carried by a majority of eighteen.

Resolutions
passed re-
specting the
influence of
the crown.

Mr. Dunning pursuing his success, moved a second resolution, "that it was competent to the House,

The expen-
diture of the
civil list :

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and the re-
 lief of the
 people.

Resolutions
reported.

10th April.
Motion for
account of
monies paid
to members
of parlia-
ment.

Vote for
rendering
certain of-
ficers inca-
pable of
sitting.

whenever they thought proper, to examine into and correct abuses in the expenditure of the civil list revenues." To this proposition only a feeble resistance was offered: the minister, with more reason than probability of success, deprecating the further proceeding of the committee.

A third motion, made by Mr. Thomas Pitt, and similarly deprecated by Lord North, also passed without a division; affirming, that it was the duty of the House to provide immediate and effectual redress of the abuses complained of in the petitions.

As if afraid of giving the House a moment for recollection, Mr. Fox moved, at past one o'clock in the morning, that the resolutions should be immediately reported; Lord North in vain opposed the proceeding, as violent, arbitrary, and unusual; the report was brought up, and the House adjourned.

On the nextsitting of the committee, Mr. Dunning moved that, in order to secure the independence of parliament, and obviate all suspicions of its purity, the proper officer should, in future, within seven days after the meeting, lay before the House an account of all monies paid out of the civil list, or any part of the public revenue, to or for the use of, or in trust for any member of parliament. However unfounded the suspicion might be, he said, the public firmly believed that large sums were conveyed into the pockets of their representatives. If any members did unduly possess themselves of the public money, this proposition would distinguish them; if not, it would be acceded to without difficulty. Slight objections were made to the motion, as proposing a test which might be unpleasant to the Upper House, and beget differences; but it was carried without a division.

Mr. Dunning next proposed a resolution, that the treasurer of the chamber, treasurer, cofferer, comptroller, and master of the household, the clerks of the green cloth, and their deputies, should be rendered incapable of sitting in the House of Commons. This

motion encountered considerable opposition, and on a division of the committee, the majority in favour of the opposition was reduced to two.^s

Before the next sitting of the committee, the indisposition of the speaker occasioned an adjournment of ten days, which was moved by Mr. Dunning, and sanctioned by the general body of opposition, though objected to by Lord North, as inconvenient, and detrimental to the pursuit of public business.

When the speaker had sufficiently recovered to attend his duty, Mr. Dunning moved an address, requesting the King "not to dissolve the parliament, or prorogue the session, till proper measures should be adopted for diminishing the influence of the crown, and correcting the other evils complained of in the petitions." He sarcastically alluded to the unusual fulness of the House, hoping the new comers would show their zeal for their country, their regard for the people, and their abhorrence of undue influence, by supporting the motion, and that the two hundred and thirty-three of the sixth of April would receive an augmentation of twenty or thirty. Mr. Thomas Pitt, who seconded the motion, read resolutions of the Cambridge county meeting, approving the late proceedings, and conjured the House not to repress the budding confidence of the nation, and inspire popular rage; when the people were once inflamed, who could stop them, or say, "thus far shalt thou go and no farther?"

Mr. Adam was the most conspicuous opponent of the motion, and made a speech of extraordinary ability, showing the improper foundation of the petitions, and the error of those who had devised an appeal to the people. He painted in terms no less animated than just, the dangers of beginning a reformation by means of the people, and cited the memorable days of Charles I. to prove, that although human intellect and virtue were then at their great-

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14th.
Illness of the
speaker.
Adjourn-
ment.

24th.
Motion
against
dissolving
parliament.

CHAP. est height ; though the patriots who began an opposition to the court were justified by the most imperious motives, yet they were compelled by increasing licentiousness to withdraw from active interference, and doomed to view the overthrow of the constitution, and the establishment of the most oppressive and arbitrary despotism that had ever cursed a nation.

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Mr. Fox made a spirited reply, ascribing the misfortunes of Charles I. to the obstinacy and insincerity of his character, and to the omission of an early attention to the wishes of his subjects, which would have prevented all the calamities of his reign and mischiefs which succeeded it. The ministry and their prostitute followers had spared no pains, scrupled at no means to traduce, calumniate and vilify those who opposed them ; personal weaknesses, follies of youth and foibles of age, had been exhibited to the public as enormous crimes ; some were abused for being too rich, others for being too poor, and slight indiscretions were converted into grievous accusations. But would these artifices induce them to abandon their own vote, the glorious vote of the sixth of April ? A vote which the present motion alone could carry into execution. The House was pledged, in the most solemn manner, to redress grievances ; like an individual who enters into a bond with a penalty, they were bound to reduce the undue influence of the crown, and the penalty of non-performance would be a forfeiture of the affections of the people.

The motion was reprobated by Lord George Germaine, as an improper mode of abridging the royal prerogative ; Mr. Dundas ridiculed it as a recruiting officer sent out by opposition to beat up for grievances and enlist motions. It was rejected by a majority of fifty-one. ^t

Rejected.

Indignation
of Mr. Fox.

After the division, Mr. Fox, in a philippic no less eloquent than severe, expressed his indignant resentment at the vote, which he termed treacherous, scan-

dalous, and disgraceful. Not so in those who opposed the proposition of the sixth of April; they acted consistently, and like men differing upon principle, and would have been guilty of the most shameful versatility, if they abandoned the measures they had once avowed. But who could contemplate, without mingled indignation and surprise, the conduct of another set of men, who after voting with him that the influence of the crown ought to be diminished, pledging themselves to the House, the nation, their constituents, the people at large, to each other, and to themselves, for the redress of grievances, abandoned that solemn engagement by rejecting the means proposed: it was shameful, it was base, it was unmanly, it was treacherous. The contempt he felt for those who were at the devotion of the minister, was mingled sometimes with pity, and sometimes with so much respect as was due to the solitary virtue of fidelity, gratitude, or consistency. They did not *take in* their patron or their friends with false hopes or delusive promises; they divided regularly with the minister, through thick and thin, on every question. To concur in general propositions, and refuse assent to effective ones, was a paradox in party and in politics; he was *taken in*, deluded, imposed upon. He trusted, however, that such gross tergiversation would never pass without detection, nor fail to be followed by the contempt it deserved; he did not despair that the people would see and pursue their own interest at a general election, that they would learn to distinguish between their open friends and foes, and their worst of enemies, the concealed ones.

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Lord North extended the protection of his eloquence to those who had drawn on themselves this severe attack; he said, Mr. Fox's language was such as no provocation could justify; it was indecent and improper; an invective, and not a parliamentary speech. He bantered the leader of opposition with

CHAP. XXXVII. considerable humour and effect on his irritability at finding himself in a minority again, after having, for a short moment of his life, been in a majority, and contrasted it with his own philosophical calmness, when he stood in so unexpected and novel a situation. He did not think himself justified in rising in the anguish of defeat and disappointment, and accusing those who had frequently voted with him, of baseness, treachery, versatility, and other improper motives, and he advised Mr. Fox not to be, for the future, so rash and hasty.

1780.
Further proceedings on the petitions.

19th May.

26th.
Report of the committee refused.

Although Lord North truly observed on this occasion, that the petitions, and the resolutions framed on them, were still before the House, and the rejection of one single measure did not preclude the right of further consideration, yet this defeat of opposition did, in fact, conclude the discussion. A motion by serjeant Adair, for withholding the grant of further supplies, till the grievances of the people were redressed, was negatived without a debate^u; and when Mr. Dunning moved to receive the report of the committee on the tenth of April, the question for the chairman's quitting the chair was carried by a majority of forty-three.^x

Such was the termination of this famous contest, which, considering the means used to interest the people at large, the strenuous exertions of opposition, the alarming tendency of the resolutions past on the sixth and tenth of April, and the menacing aspect of the times, may be safely pronounced one of the most critical struggles which the constitution had sustained since the revolution.

It will naturally strike the reader with as much astonishment as it did the public, that a House of Commons which had so warmly adopted the American war, and supported the measures of government with so large a majority, should assent to Mr. Dunning's extraordinary motion against the influence of the crown, and for the exclusion of persons holding

certain offices of government from sitting in parliament.

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It will appear no less inconceivable, that having manifested so decided a resolution to overturn the ministry, the same House should, after a recess of only fourteen days, negative all the subsequent motions of opposition, though intended to carry their former resolutions into effect.

This sudden change in the conduct of the House, has been attributed solely to influence and corruption, and those independent members who thus thwarted the effects of their former vote, have been accused of inconsistency and treachery; but their conduct in both cases naturally resulted from the temper of the times, the state of the ministry, and the violence of opposition.

The distracted state of Ireland, the unsuccessful progress of the war in America and the degraded condition of the English navy, which had suffered the united fleets of France and Spain to ride triumphant in the channel, and menace the British coasts, excited general alarm and indignation. The divided state of the cabinet, the candid and easy temper of Lord North, and the unpopularity of Lord Sandwich and Lord George Germaine, increased the ferment and apprehensions of the nation, and induced many independent members of the House of Commons, who were warm friends to government, to second the efforts of opposition. On the other hand, the Marquis of Rockingham and Sir George Savile's character for integrity, the manly spirit of Mr. Fox, and the splendid talents of Mr. Burke, inspired hope and confidence, and the parliament, as well as the people, were inclined to any measure, not detrimental to the constitution, which was likely to substitute an efficient cabinet in the room of a distracted ministry.

Such was the general disposition at the time of Mr. Dunning's first motion, on the influence of the crown, which was therefore carried by a majority of

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of eighteen. But on his second motion, for the exclusion of certain persons holding offices under government, the violence of the opposition had already disgusted many of their new adherents, and the question passed by a majority of only two. In this situation of affairs, the illness of the speaker occasioned an adjournment of ten days, and after the recess, the opposition being too eager to pursue their advantages, alarmed the moderate party by a motion which tended not to diminish, but to annihilate the power of the crown, and to revive the tyranny of the long parliament. Accordingly the House threw out, by a majority of fifty-one, the last motion of Mr. Dunning.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH:

1778 — 1779 — 1780 — 1781.

Effects of appeals to the people. — Origin and progress of the riots in Edinburgh and Glasgow on the subject of popery. — Formation of Protestant associations. — Discussions in parliament. — Corresponding committees established. — Lord George Gordon elected president of the Protestant associations. — Effects of debating societies. — Intemperance of Lord George Gordon. — Petitions to parliament against the Catholics. — London petition. — Meeting at Coachmakers' Hall. — Meeting of petitioners in St. George's Fields. — Motion by the Duke of Richmond for a reform of parliament. — The members insulted. — The house of commons interrupted. — Chapels of ambassadors burnt. — Riots subside — and are renewed. — Privy council held. — Proclamation. — Riots more alarming. — Parliament adjourned. — Numerous conflagrations — Timidity of government. — Second privy Council. — Exertions of the military. — The riots quelled. — Lord George Gordon committed to the Tower. — King's speech on the riots. — Lord Mansfield's opinion on military interference. — Petitions rejected by Parliament. — Judicious speech from the throne on terminating the session. — Political effect of the riots. — Trial of the rioters — and of Lord George Gordon. — Dissolution of parliament.

IT is a misfortune ever attendant on appeals to the people in questions of government that the first measures, however reasonable and moderate, are perverted by enthusiasts or intriguers. Extravagant or designing men, assuming the direction of the populace, find it easy to obtain a dangerous ascendancy; and through their want of discretion, or want of integrity to guide aright the steps of the erring and giddy multitude, tremendous effects are the result of causes apparently inadequate, and in their origin contemptibly insignificant. While men of the first talent

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Effect of ap-
peals to the
people.

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and fortune were, by means which they considered constitutional and regular, attempting to excite in the minds of the real constituents of the representative body, a disgust against the system of government, and urging them to clamour for changes, far too important to be so dictated, a rash fanatic, uniting enthusiasm with obstinacy and unlimited impudence, produced all the mischievous effects of madness, combined with wickedness. By his influence over the lower order of people, he was enabled to silence and disperse the legislature, paralyze the civil arm, and deliver up the metropolis of Britain, for several successive days, to the alarm of pillage, the horrors of wide-spreading conflagration, and the devastations of unbridled ferocity.

Growth of
fanaticism in
Scotland.

The repeal or modification of the act of the tenth and eleventh of William III. for preventing the growth of popery, was the means of adding the fury of religious bigotry to the rage of political discussion, and of engendering a dark and diabolical fanaticism, which disgraced and disturbed the kingdom. The benefits granted to Roman Catholics by the repealing act^a did not extend to Scotland; but as a loyal declaration of the people of that persuasion was supposed to have considerably influenced government in affording relief to those in England, and as their peaceable and orderly behaviour, on every occasion, rendered them unexceptionable objects of legislative benevolence, measures were commenced for procuring, in their behalf, some relaxation of a system of law uncommonly severe, and frequently, even in modern times, enforced to the very extreme of rigour. Their

Proposal to
relieve the
Catholics.

^a The benefits procured to Papists by this repeal were, an exemption of bishops, priests, and instructors of youth from prosecution and imprisonment, a security of the rights of inheritance, and permission to purchase lands in fee simple; but the Catholics were not to enjoy these privileges except on condition of taking the oaths of allegiance, of renunciation of the Stuart family; an abjuration of the positions that it is lawful to murder heretics, and that no faith should be kept with them; and of that principle which legalizes the deposition, or murder, of princes excommunicated by the pope. They were also on oath to deny the pope's authority, temporal or civil, within this realm.

claims being well founded, rational and moderately solicited, produced at first no uneasiness; the general assembly of the church of Scotland seemed influenced by the prevailing spirit of liberality, and rejected, by a large majority, a proposal to remonstrate against the bill which was passing through the British parliament; but the gloomy rancour of fanaticism marked the opportunity, and soon found means to single out victims for popular rage. A scurrilous pamphlet was produced by a nonjuring clergyman in Edinburgh, exciting the public animosity against the Catholics, published at the expense of a society (to judge by this proceeding grossly misnamed) for propagating Christian knowledge, and circulated with industry and profusion among all ranks. No people on earth have a more zealous and honest regard for the interest of their church establishment than the Scots; but the same fervour of spirit which, when well directed, had enabled them to disregard persecution, and by passiveness alone to triumph over religious tyranny, was now perverted to wicked purposes, and rendered, among the lower class, a motive for the commission of shameful crimes and outrages. The newspapers, those ready vehicles of slander, intemperance, and sedition, were filled with recapitulations and abstracts of the laws against Papists and popery, at once reminding the people of their great power over a part of the community, and recalling to memory the historical reasons on which the grant of that power, now useless and oppressive, had been founded. The more ardent of the preachers appealed to the passions of their hearers by incendiary declamations, and the synod of Glasgow adopted resolutions for opposing any bill which might be brought into parliament in favour of the Roman Catholics of Scotland.

These resolutions were followed by several other synods, but that of Lothian and Tweeddale, which met in Edinburgh, and from which great results were expected, refused to sanction any measure for impeding the humane intentions of government in relieving

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1778.

Oct.
Efforts of
fanatics.

November.
Formation
of Protest-
ant associa-
tions.

CHAP. their innocent fellow-subjects. This laudable moderation afforded to some zealots of Edinburgh, an opportunity of raising the cry, that the Protestant religion was abandoned; and about a dozen tradesmen, clerks, and apprentices, erected themselves into a "committee for the Protestant interest." They published in newspapers their resolutions to oppose the bill for relief of Papists, invited general correspondence, and, through the medium of the press, endeavoured to inflame the populace against the objects of their jealousy. Correspondence with this new committee was speedily opened, and resolutions of boroughs, parishes and private societies, together with inflammatory pamphlets, and scurrilous libels, were daily published and circulated in every form, and in every direction.

1779.
Jan.
Riots in
Edinburgh.

29th Jan.

The Catholics, seeing the peril in which their first attempt had involved them, in vain endeavoured to retreat from the gathering storm, and regain their former tranquil, though insecure condition. In a letter to Lord North, which was published in the London newspapers, they declined the intended application to parliament, chusing rather to sacrifice their own advantages than endanger the peace of their country; but the populace of Edinburgh, long instigated by every art in the power of misguided or designing individuals, had already prepared to execute summary vengeance on men whom they considered the enemies of their faith. An incendiary hand-bill was scattered about the city, inviting those who should find it, to meet at the Leith Wind, on an appointed evening, to pull down *the pillar of popery*, lately erected: such was the denomination given to a suite of rooms, occupied by a Romish priest, one of which was set apart for the attendance of his congregation. This daring invitation was not issued till the popular mind was sufficiently prepared; already were the individuals of the persecuted persuasion kept in constant terror, afraid to remain in their houses, and even hunted through the streets with derisive shouts, and

threatening exclamations. A numerous rabble effectually completed the recommended destruction, extending their fury to another house of popish worship, and burning or purloining a valuable library belonging to the priest; the dwellings thus demolished, were known to be inhabited by various other families of tradesmen and mechanics. The mob, unimpeded in their career, continued several days destroying the houses and furniture of, real or reputed, Papists, insulting their persons, and threatening their lives. Gathering courage from impunity, they extended their views, and denounced vengeance against all who had favoured sentiments of toleration: in this number were included Dr. Robertson, the justly celebrated historian, who in his writings had recommended general benevolence in matters of opinion, and Mr. Crosbie the advocate, whose only imputed crime was that of professionally drawing up the bill intended for parliament.

During such scenes, the inactivity of the civil power, if sufficiently strong in itself, or adequately reinforced by extraneous assistance, would have seemed highly censurable; but the provost of Edinburgh was more than inactive; his conduct was an indirect sanction, if not an incentive to a rabble, who being without order and without partizans of any consequence, would have shrunk back from the first combined or regular resistance. Their intentions were manifested, not only by the hand-bills strewed in the streets, but by several minor acts of outrage before the grand attack, yet on a formal application, the provost only promised to convoke the deacons of the corporation, and caution them to use their influence in dissuading the people from joining in the intended tumult; and when a lieutenant of the navy, commanding a press-gang, offered to quell the riot, he was commanded by the provost to quit Edinburgh. The city guard was no more alert than the chief magistrate in repressing these

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1779.

2d Feb.

Reprehensible conduct of the magistracy.

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1779.

5th Feb.

9th Feb.
Riots at
Glasgow.

criminal excesses ; and when the military, under the Duke of Buccleugh, generously offered to preserve the peace, they were not only prevented from interfering, but the prisoners, whom they took in the very act of burning a house, were discharged by the provost, and permitted to rejoin their fellow-criminals. Terror at length effected what a sense of public duty had failed in producing, and the magistrates claimed military assistance, by which the tumult was speedily quelled. The provost and his colleagues filled up the measures of their absurdities by a ridiculous proclamation, in which, from a desire to “remove the fears and apprehensions which had distressed the minds of many well-meaning people in the metropolis, with regard to the repeal of the penal statutes against Papists, the magistrates informed them, and the public in general, that the bill for that purpose was totally laid aside : it was therefore expected that such (*i.e.* well-meaning) persons would carefully avoid connecting themselves with any tumultuous assembly for the future.” They promised to take the most vigorous measures for repressing tumults and riots which might afterwards arise ; “being satisfied that *future* disorders could proceed only from the wicked views of bad and designing men.” This acknowledgment of their past neglect, and appearance of coincidence in sentiment with the rioters, was at once an insult to the sufferers, and a triumph to the mob. The miserable victims of persecution remained unsupported, no attempt was made to redress their grievances, they were still afraid to appear publicly, and their subsistence was chiefly derived from the clandestine bounty of their friends.

Edinburgh furnished an example sufficiently inviting to the fanatics of Glasgow, though the objects of persecution were so few, that they had not a chapel, or even a priest. The chief fury of the populace fell on the house and works of Mr. Bagnal, a gentleman from Staffordshire, who had established in the vicinity

a manufactory for the pottery distinguished by the name of his own county. His property was utterly destroyed, and his wife and family, after many indignities, compelled to seek refuge in the city, the neighbours being afraid to shelter them. The magistrates and clergy, however, without delay repaired the depredations of the mob, by bountifully relieving the exigencies of the sufferers, and liberally refunding Mr. Bagnal's whole loss.^b

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1779.

These violences could not escape the attention of parliament. On the first appearance of the lord advocate, Mr. Dundas, in the House of Commons after the riots, he was interrogated by Mr. Wilkes respecting the completion of a promise, made the last session, to bring in a bill for the relief of his Catholic countrymen. With his usual frankness, the lord advocate stated, that from the violences and insurrections in all parts of Scotland, it had been agreed, between him and the principal people of that persuasion, to defer measures of relief, till subsiding prejudice should leave room for the operation of cool persuasion. Mr. Wilkes made an animated reply, decrying the sacrifice of the dignity of parliament to the seditious populace of Scotland. London, he said, might, after the example of Glasgow and Edinburgh, prevent by insurrection any matter however important, from being brought into parliament. He animadverted on the magistrates, their apology for the rabble, and their promise of concession, and did not hesitate to pronounce, that when the Catholics could not find protection for their lives and properties even in the capital, there was a dissolution of all government.

Mr. Burke introduced a further discussion on the subject, by presenting a petition from the injured

15th Mar.
Discussed in
parliament.

^b Taken principally from *Considerations on the State of the Roman Catholics in Scotland: A Memorial to the Public in behalf of the Catholics in Edinburgh and Glasgow, containing an account of the riot against them in February 1779; and Fanaticism and Treason, or a History of the rebellious Insurrections in June 1790, first edition.*

CHAP. Catholics for compensation and further security.

XXXVIII. Mr. Fox, in supporting the prayer, said, the honour and humanity of the House ought not to be limited to compensation, but they should repeal the penal laws, undeterred by petty insurrections in a little corner of the empire. Unwilling to urge extremities, Lord North suspended the consideration of the petition, by the previous question ; declaring that voluntary compensation would be made, which was more eligible than compulsory.

1779.

Corresponding committees formed ;

and Lord George Gordon elected president.

5th May.

Effects of debating societies.

Such proceedings, both in England and Scotland, could not be expected to repress the active genius of fanaticism once let loose ; politics mingled in the question, and eighty-five corresponding societies, similarly formed with that of Edinburgh, were speedily erected under the specious pretext of protecting the protestant religion. Lord George Gordon, a wild, enthusiastic, moody fanatic, was elected their president : he replied to Mr. Fox's suggestions in the late debate, by declaring it highly inexpedient to tolerate the Catholics of Scotland, equally with those of England or Ireland ; and before the end of the session, moved, but his motion was not seconded, that the popish petition presented by Mr. Burke should "be thrown over the table." In his speech, he daringly asserted that the whole people of Scotland, fit to bear arms, except a few Roman Catholics, were ripe for insurrection and rebellion, and had invited him to be their leader or privy counsellor. It was not in the power of parliament, consistently with the act of union, to alter the religious law of Scotland ; the natives were impressed with that opinion, and would perish in arms, or prevail in the contest.

Although the active spirit of fanaticism had long subsided in England, sufficient means were not wanting to give birth and vigour to a dangerous combination, in which politics and religion might be united in the production of formidable commotions. Meetings of men desirous, either from the necessity of

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1779.

professional pursuit, the hopes of adventitious advantage, or the solicitations of personal vanity, to excel in the arts of oratory, had long been established in the metropolis: they had been hitherto considered always harmless, sometimes useful, often ridiculous; they had been satirized from the press, and on the stage, but ridicule alone was employed against them. The modern rage of discussion brought them into more conspicuous notice; they were resorted to by men of lively talents, though of confined information; public measures were debated before large audiences; and, as little delicacy was preserved in mentioning the names, or alluding to the conduct of exalted personages, all who found pleasure in gross abuse, and harsh raillery, occasionally intermingled with wit, and sometimes presenting a scanty portion of information, frequented these assemblies, which were termed debating societies. Religious topics were sometimes debated on ordinary days, and separate societies were established for the discussion of sacred subjects on Sundays. By means of these clubs, Lord George Gordon succeeded in forming a "Protestant association" in England, of which, as in Scotland, he was declared president. While a man of his birth and station could condescend to court such an assemblage, his countenance and protection were to them a subject of pride, and of individual gratification. His family was highly honourable; he was a member of the British parliament; and although his absurd speeches frequently thinned the House, still they often displayed ability, and contained no inconsiderable portion of coarse sarcastic wit. Opposition treated him with complacency, and something very like encouragement; the most distinguished leaders called him in public their honourable friend, and often supported his arguments, and justified his conduct in the House.

His success in forming these associations considerably augmented, what appeared to want no increase,

Intempe-
rance of
Lord
George
Gordon.

CHAP. his violence and gross buffoonery. On the first day
 XXXVIII: of the session, while dilating in most unwarrantable
 1779.
 25th Nov. terms on the disposition of the people of Great Britain
 and Ireland, he said the indulgences granted to Pa-
 pists had alarmed all Scotland, where the people
 were determined to guard against a sect in such fa-
 vour with the ministry: nor were these sentiments
 confined to himself; government should find a hun-
 dred and twenty thousand men at his back, who
 would avow and support them, and whose warmth of
 spirit was still greater than his own. They had sent
 petitions to the ministers who had disregarded, to
 the lord chancellor who had suppressed, and to
 the speaker who had incurred displeasure by not
 delivering them to the House of Commons. They
 had now printed their sentiments and resolutions,
 which he was to deliver to the King and the Prince of
 Wales, for their instruction on the manner in which the
 Scots would consent to be governed. The people
 of Scotland, he said, were irritated, and in matters
 of religion exasperated, being convinced that the
 King was a papist.

The indifference with which these indecent and almost treasonable attacks were endured, probably arose, partly from respect to the family of this intemperate man, and partly from a notion that he was not free from insanity. During the whole session, however he continued the same course of ribaldry. He constantly boasted of the number of men attached to his person and subjected to his will, calumniated the King, and defied parliament. In a debate on Mr. Burke's reform bill, after fatiguing the House with a series of absurdities, he asserted that he had in Scotland a hundred and sixty thousand men at his command, and if the King did not keep his coronation oath, they would do more than abridge his revenue, they would cut off his head.

1780.
 8th Mar.
 Petitions to parliament

It would be much beneath the dignity of history to record the excesses of so coarse a fanatic, but for

the fatal consequences with which they were attended^c. C H A P. XXXVIII. A petition had already been presented to the House of Commons, signed by nearly three thousand inhabitants of Rochester, and another from Maidstone, praying a repeal of the act allowing indulgences to Catholics; when Lord George Gordon thought proper by public advertisement, as president of the Protestant association, to invite a petition from the inhabitants of London and its environs, on the same subject. "If they united," he told them, "as one man for the honour of God, and liberties of the people, the kingdom might yet experience the blessing of divine Providence, and the restoration of love and confidence among brethren. But if they continued obstinate in error, and spread idolatry and corruption through the land, nothing could be expected but division among the people, distraction in the senate, and discontent in the camp, with all other calamities attendant on those nations whom God had delivered over to arbitrary power and despotism." Lord George 26th May. Gordon gave notice in parliament, of the day when this petition would be presented, and of his design to require the attendance of all the petitioners, in an humble, decent, and respectful manner.

For the purpose of collecting an increased number of signatures, the petition was deposited at his house, and, by another advertisement, he called a meeting of the Protestant association at Coachmakers Hall, one of the most celebrated rooms where debating societies were held. At this place he made a long harangue to a large assembly on the repeal of the act against Catholics, and the rapidity with which it had passed through parliament, decrying the measure as repugnant to the principles of the revolution, and dangerous to the succession of the house of Hanover.

1780.
against the
Catholics.
11th April.
1st May.
8th May.
London
petition.

29th.
Meeting
at Coach-
makers
Hall.

^c Numerous instances of his violence and ribaldry are not here commemorated; they may be found in the debates from 1779 to 1780, or a copious collection of them in the Political Magazine for June 1780. which contains the greatest details of the violent transactions of that month.

CHAP. To inflame still further the minds of his auditors, he
 XXXVIII. read the catechism of the church of Rome, and an
 1780. indulgence granted by the pope to his flock in Eng-
 land. The alarming growth of popery, he said, could
 only be resisted and quashed by going in a firm,
 manly and determined manner to the House of Com-
 mons, and displaying to their representatives their
 resolution to preserve their religious freedom with
 their lives. "For his part, he would run all hazards
 with the people: and if the people were too lukewarm
 to run all hazards with him, when their conscience
 and their country called them forth, they might get
 another president; he was not a lukewarm man, and
 if they meant to spend their time in mock debate,
 and idle opposition, they might get another leader." Loud
 acclamations followed this incendiary speech, attended
 by a resolution that the whole body of the
 Protestant association would assemble in St. George's
 Fields, on the second of June, with blue cockades in
 their hats, to distinguish real Protestants, and friends
 of the petition, from their enemies. The president
 declared that if the assemblage amounted to less than
 twenty thousand, he would not deliver the petition;
 a meeting of forty thousand was anticipated, and
 the advertisement of resolutions assigned that as a
 reason for convening this petitioning army in St.
 George's Fields.

2d June.
 Meeting of
 the peti-
 tioners in
 St. George's
 Fields.

On the day appointed, not twenty thousand only, but sixty, and some accounts extend them to a hundred thousand, petitioners or associators, met in the appointed place. They were marshalled in separate bands, and after an harangue from Lord George, the main body made an unnecessary circuit over London Bridge, and through the city, to the seat of parliament. They marched six a breast, preceded by a man carrying on his head the petition, signed with a hundred and twenty thousand names or marks.

Motion by
 the Duke of
 Richmond

On this inauspicious and disgraceful day, the Duke of Richmond introduced to the Lords a project for

reforming the lower house of parliament. He harangued, in the hacknied style, on the abuses of government, the influence of ministers, the secret invisible power which directed the whole political machine, and the just complaints and pretensions of the people. His plan was to dissolve parliaments annually, abolish burgage tenures, and admit to a right of suffrage every *man* of full age, and not disqualified by law.

This wild scheme of popular reform met with a practical rebuke in the moment of its projection. Before the sitting of the House, the mob, occupying all the passes to Palace Yard, rendered the approach difficult even to their favourites ; but those who had not acquired that disgraceful distinction were robbed, beaten, and even threatened with the loss of their lives. The populace were prevented from rushing into the House by the activity and resolution of the door-keepers alone : several peers exhibited, on their entrance, incontestable proofs of the indignities they had sustained, and stated to the chair the danger of other members, while the Duke of Richmond, in the genuine zeal of reform, complained of interruption, and seemed to consider his speech of more importance than the lives of Lord Boston and the Bishop of Lincoln, who were at that moment declared to be in the hands of the rabble^a. In this ridiculous spirit of procrastination, and factious delay, a generous proposal by Lord Townshend for the House to issue forth in a body and rescue Lord Boston, was converted into a debate, whether the speaker should attend with the mace, which was only terminated by the appearance of Lord Boston, whose life might have been sacrificed to popular rage, before assistance was obtained

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XXXVIII.

1780.
for a reform
of parlia-
ment.

The mem-
bers of par-
liament in-
sulted.

^a The rage against the Bishop of Lincoln had no other foundation than his being brother to the Lord Chancellor (Thurlow) : Lord Boston was attacked on an untrue and wicked suggestion, that he was a member of the Romish church. Lord Boston effected his own liberation : the bishop, after sustaining much insult and violence, was rescued by a young law student, received into a private house, and concealed in the attire of a woman from the populace (who swore they would cut the sign of the cross on his forehead) ; several other peers were maltreated.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

1780.

through so tardy a medium. One of the Middlesex magistrates was called to the bar, who declared that every exertion could only procure the attendance of six constables, and that no civil force could quell so large and tumultuous a mob. A suggestion of the propriety of calling in the military, under the authority of the civil power, was resisted by Lord Shelburne, who declared, though ministers might be fond of such a measure, it should never meet with his sanction. The original debate was interrupted; and the peers separately retired, leaving, at last, Lord Mansfield, who had shewn, throughout the day, the utmost presence of mind, with no other protection than the officers of the house and his own servants.

The petitioners insult and interrupt the House of Commons.

The House of Commons exhibited a scene equally disgraceful. Many of the members were no less ill-treated than the lords. The rabble took possession of the lobby, making the House resound with cries of “No popery,” and knocking violently at the door: and when it is considered how powerful they then were, and that there was no resistance, it is not easy to say what prevented them from rushing in. The motions for bringing up, and entering into the immediate consideration of the petition, were made by Lord George Gordon, and seconded by alderman Bull: the former was granted of course, the latter being amended by a delay of four days, the House divided, and only nine members were found sufficiently flexible to consent to a deliberation, under the influence of an outrageous mob^c. During the debate preceding the division, Lord George Gordon frequently went into the lobby, harangued his noisy troop, and encouraged them to perseverance, by expressing hopes that the alarm would compel the King to give directions to his ministers for granting the

^c Their names were, Lord George Gordon and alderman Bull, tellers; Earl Verney, Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, Sir Michael le Fleming, Sir James Lowther, Sir Joseph Mawbey, Mr. Peihill, and Mr. Tollemache. On the other side were 192.

C H A P.
XX XVIII.
1780.

prayer of their petition. He represented, or, to speak more correctly, misrepresented, what was said by the members, which being observed by Colonel Holroyd, he took hold of Lord George Gordon when he returned into the House, and said, “He had heretofore imputed his conduct to madness, but now found it more characterized by malice, and if he repeated such proceedings he should immediately move for his commitment to Newgate.” Lord George, with great mildness, and puritanical cant, “ lamented that a person for whom he had so much respect should consider him in that light.” He desisted from going out at the door, but afterwards went up stairs and spoke to the people in the lobby from a kind of gallery. General Conway intimated a determination to resist any attempt to intrude into the House; and a member^f declared, that on the bursting in of the first man his sword should pass through Lord George, and not through the rioter.

The House continued in this extraordinary state until about nine o’clock, when the serjeant at arms having communicated to the speaker that a detachment of soldiers was drawn up in the court of requests, and the passages cleared, the House adjourned. Mr. Addington, an active Middlesex magistrate appearing with a party of light horse, prevailed on part of the mob to retire. Parties of them, however, filed off in different directions, and burnt and plundered the chapels of the Sardinian and Bavarian ambassadors; some were apprehended and committed to Newgate.

The early part of the ensuing day exhibiting no appearances of a renewal of the late outrages, parliament met without interruption. Lord Bathurst moved an address for “prosecuting the authors, abettors, and instruments of yesterday’s outrages;” while the Duke of Richmond imputed the whole blame to

Chapels of
embassadors
burnt.

3d. June.
Riots
subside.

^f Said to be Colonel Murray, a relation of Lord George Gordon.

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the ministry, who although timely apprized of the meeting, took no measures for preventing its pernicious effects. He had passed through the mob in his way to the House with little interruption ; he heard no complaint against any law, but the Quebec act, and he thought those complaints not ill-founded. Lord Shelburne drew a distinction between toleration and establishment, intimating that more than toleration had been obtained for the Catholics. Lord Bathurst's motion was agreed to, and the House having prosecuted, without interruption, a long debate on some dispatches lately received from Admiral Rodney, adjourned till the sixth.

They are
renewed.

Contrary, however, to all expectation, the riots were renewed in the evening ; a party assembled in Moorfields, and did some mischief under the very eye of Kennet, the Lord Mayor, a weak and ignorant man, totally void of spirit, or mental resource, who might with the slightest exertion have crushed the tumult in its infancy.^g

4th June.

During the ensuing day, which was Sunday, their outrages were confined to Moorfields and its vicinity ; and the military, though called out, were not permitted to fire. The real damage was hitherto less considerable than the alarm, and government laboured under the mistake that the proceedings of the rabble portended nothing serious, but were mere irregularities.^h

5th.
Privy council
held.

Proclama-
tion.

Riots more
alarming.

Before the drawing-room at St. James's, in compliment to His Majesty's birth-day, a privy council was held, but the tumults yet appeared of so small importance, that no other measure was adopted, but a proclamation offering a reward of five hundred pounds for the discovery of those who were concerned in destroying the chapels of the ambassadors. In the course of this day, however, the riots assumed a more

^g See Wilkes's speech in the House of Commons, 19th June, 1780.

^h Such was the opinion expressed by Lord Mansfield to Mr. Strahan. See Boswell's life of Johnson, vol. iii. p. 457. 8vo. edition.

formidable aspect ; extending beyond the chapels of the obnoxious persuasion, and indicating a wild, ungovernable and determined fury. The dawn was ushered in by an assault on Sir George Savile's house in Leicester-fields : he had moved the repeal of the statute of William, and his patriotic exertions and parliamentary renown, could not avert the fury of the mob, who demolished part of his dwelling, and burnt his furniture before the door. Mr. Rainsforth and Mr. Maberly, two respectable men of business, who had made themselves conspicuous by laudable exertions in apprehending the rioters, were, for that reason, singled out as victims, and their houses destroyed. In Wapping and East Smithfield, Romish chapels were rased, and the wrecks being brought in parade before Lord George Gordon's house, were burnt in the adjacent fields.

This mischievous fanatic was now alarmed at the effects of his own imprudence, and put forth a handbill in the name of the Protestant association, disavowing the riots. When the House met according to adjournment, he found some members determined to check his extravagancies. Colonel Herbert, afterward Earl of Canarvon, called across the House, peremptorily commanding him to take from his hat the badge of sedition, the blue cockade, and threatening if he refused, to do it himself: Lord George tamely obeyed, and put the cockade in his pocket. Although the approaches to the houses of parliament were as before obstructed by the mob, no member was injured in his passage, but Lord Sandwich, who was wounded, and his carriage destroyed. The House of Lords, without attempting any discussion, adjourned to the nineteenth: and the House of Commons passed resolutions vindicating their own privileges, and an address for repairing the injuries done to the property of foreign ambassadors, and prosecuting by the attorney-general, those who had occasioned or abetted the disturbances. Some members of opposition seemed sensible of the

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Terror of
Lord George
Gordon.

6th.

Adjourn-
ment of par-
liament.

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dreadful emergency to which the country was reduced, and disposed to strengthen government. Mr. Burke, who was implicated in the odium of having favoured Roman Catholics, recommended unanimity and defensive associations ; and Sir George Savile thanked the ministry for the assistance of the military in protecting his dwelling. Mr. Fox, however, refused his support to government, alleging that administration had dissolved every bond of society, and disgraced all who acted with them ; and an intimation that it would be proper to expel Lord George Gordon, was received with marks of disapprobation. A concession was made to the rabble, which if founded in prudence, was deficient in dignity, by a resolution, “ That as soon as the tumults subsided, the House would proceed to the consideration of the petitions of His Majesty’s Protestant subjects.”

Excessive
fury of the
rioters.

6th & 7th
Numerous
conflagra-
tions.

This second collection of the mob gave new force to disorder, as the former slight attempts to restrain the rioters, only served to make magistracy ridiculous, and impart to guilt the hardihood arising from impunity. While the Houses were sitting, the minister’s abode in Downing-street was attacked, but protected by the military. The insurgents, no longer undetermined in their purpose, or deficient in advisers, were marshalled in bands, and sent on distinct expeditions, which during two days were executed with rapidity and success, spreading universal alarm, and threatening general devastation. Religion was now hardly a pretence, though the inhabitants of the metropolis and its vicinity were obliged as a protection to their property, to chalk on their dwellings the words, “ no popery,” and to pay without resistance the irregular contributions demanded by the rioters, which were levied according to their caprice or rapacity. It were a vain and useless task to pursue methodically the train of waste and havock, and trace with precision the mischief committed by this licentious rabble during their two days dominion. The prisons

of Newgate and Clerkenwell, the Compters, the Fleet, the King's Bench, and the Marshalsea, and the gaols of Southwark, were emptied of their felons and debtors, and destroyed or greatly damaged.¹ The houses of Sir John Fielding, Mr. Hyde, and Mr. Cox, magistrates of Middlesex, were plundered and burnt; the dwelling of the Lord Chancellor was saved by posting in it a few soldiers; but the abode of Lord Mansfield met a different fate; furniture, books, and pictures, and, what was a still more irreparable loss, his manuscripts, formed during so long and active a jurisprudential and political life, all were sacrificed to the brute rage of a detestable rabble. The venerable chief justice escaped by a back way, and wrapt in a cloak, arrived at the door of a friend, requesting admittance. His wine and liquors were poured out in profusion, and probably the hope of similar plunder, more than the circumstance of their being Roman Catholics, drew the attention of the mob to two houses of the Langdales, distillers in Holborn, which were burnt, with several neighbouring buildings. At these places, the rioters drank such quantities of spirituous liquors, that many were burnt and many overwhelmed in ruins.

A reluctance, rather inexcusable than unaccountable, had enervated the arm of government, and prevented the due employment of the military during the progress of these disgraceful transactions. A general supineness seemed to pervade every department; no specific orders were issued, and without them no justice of the peace would venture to exercise the authorities confided to him by the riot act. The transactions of 1768, when a Surrey magistrate was tried on a capital indictment for such an exertion, and those who obeyed his order were

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Timidity of
government.

¹ The assault of Newgate without arms, was the most desperate attempt that could be conceived. A building so strong, that had a dozen men resisted, it seemed almost impossible to take it without artillery.

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prosecuted with all the malignity of party were not yet forgotten, nor could the ministers dismiss from their ears those fulminations which had so recently sounded in parliament, when they merely appointed a military guard, at a time when a mob was brought to their own doors, during the discussion of the popular petitions. The rage of opposition, and violence of invective which had prevailed during the whole session, and the many attempts which were daily making to render the people active and efficient in government, account, but do not apologize, for the timidity of administration.^k

7th.
Second
privy
council.

In this emergency a privy council was convened, at which not cabinet ministers alone, but all who had a seat were desired to attend: the King himself was present: irresolution still prevailed; nor was any thing decisive or effectual suggested. The council had risen, when the King anxiously demanded, if no measure could be recommended. The Attorney General answered he knew but of one—that of declaring the tumult rebellious, and authorising the military to act where necessity required, although the magistrates should not attend. The King desired him to make out the order, which he did at the table on one knee, and a proclamation was drawn up, and orders from the adjutant-general's office issued accordingly.^l It was confidently pronounced that this order would immediately put an end to the riots. The proclamation did not issue till the evening, but the public soon experienced its good effects. Orders had been sent in various directions for troops to protect the metropolis; a part of the

^k Lord Chatham, for the preservation of the country, committed two acts, which he considered illegal: he arrested a suspicious foreigner by a general warrant, and he laid an embargo on vessels laden with corn; his vindication of his conduct was a lesson, and ought to be a model to ministers: "I know the illegality," he said, "but I exercised power for the salvation of the country, at the risque of my life, and were my life to be the certain forfeit, I would again, in similar circumstances, act the same part."

^l From private information. See the proclamation and order, Annual Register, 1780, p. 265, 266.

Northumberland militia, which had marched twenty-five miles during the day, reached Lincoln's Inn just as it became night. The conflagrations at Langdale's and at Holborn Bridge, were tremendous, and appeared to spread with alarming rapidity.^m A detachment went immediately, under the command of Colonel Holroyd, to those places, and were the first to put a stop to the outrages of the mob, but not before several were killed in the act of breaking into and firing the housesⁿ. The guards soon dispersed the rioters at Blackfriars bridge, and several were pushed over the balustrades into the Thames.

The resolution to use force was adopted only in time to avert national ruin. The mob had formed the design of attacking the Bank, and cutting off the pipes by which the town is supplied with water, but, fortunately too late for execution. The military took possession of every avenue to the Bank, which was also barricaded and strongly guarded; the populace made two attempts in different quarters, but were easily repulsed, and could not be rallied: feeble and hesitative shouts subsided into distant murmurs; and after a short space into total silence. The regular firing of the soldiery produced a tremendous effect, and the mob, attentive to their own safety, and employed in removing their wounded associates, fled regardless of the orders of their leaders. Similar success attended similar exertions in other quarters; and those who at night had been terrified by the shouts of an unnumbered populace, and distracted with the portentous gleam of six-and-thirty separate conflagrations, saw in the morning no vestiges of alarm, but

The riots
quelled.

^m The night was uncommonly serene and fine, a perfect calm, otherwise the conflagration must have spread over the close parts of the town, especially as the firemen were sometimes prevented from working their engines, and sometimes joined in the pillage themselves.

ⁿ It was said there had been little combination or plan in the proceedings of the mob, yet a standard-bearer on horseback in their rear was shot, and the body and standard conveyed away in a hackney-coach: and another standard, under a small escort, was met by the detachment on its way to Holborn.

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1790.
7th June.

CHAP. smoking ruins, marks of shot, and traces of blood, XXXVIII. designating the route of the wounded fugitives.^o

1780.
8th.
Restoration
of tranquillity.

The House of Commons met the next day, but declined proceeding to business, under the notion that the metropolis was subjected to martial law, and therefore adjourned to the day appointed by the Upper House. The impression which this supposition was calculated to produce, was removed by the publication of a hand-bill, expressly denying it: business soon fell into its accustomed course; the courts of law, which, on the first day of the term, had been opened merely *pro forma*, now resumed their sittings, and alarm soon softened into mere measures of caution and preparations for defence against the repetition of outrages. The soldiers ordered from the country effected their march with zealous precipitation; the inhabitants of every place at which they halted, testified, by hospitable solicitude, a due sense of the importance of their services: they were disposed in camps in the parks, in the Museum gardens, and Lincoln's Inn gardens. Volunteer associations for the protection of liberty and property were formed, and supported with great spirit; and the temporary absence of government and security seemed to enhance their value, and inspire unusual zeal for their preservation.

9th.
Lord George
Gordon
committed
to the
Tower.

On the second day after these outrageous transactions, Lord George Gordon was apprehended by virtue of an order from the secretary of state, and committed to the Tower, on a charge of high treason. In his

o The return made to Lord Amherst on the occasion was	
Killed—By association troops and guards.	109
By light horse	101
Died in hospitals	75

Under cure in hospitals	285
	173
	458

This account is undoubtedly defective, as many dead and wounded were removed by their friends; and it is impossible to calculate how many were suffocated with spirituous liquors, and smothered in ruins.

examination before the privy council, he shewed great feebleness, and seemed surprised at the results of his own folly. He was escorted to his place of confinement by a numerous guard ; but his discomfited adherents, intent on concealment from the pursuit of offended justice, and sensible of their own weakness, did not attempt his rescue.^p

Mr. Wilkes, whose name is so inseparably connected with the history of the reign as to render his conduct, on such an occasion, worthy of regard, behaved, during these transactions, with the intrepidity and judgment becoming a magistrate of the metropolis. At the height of the tumults, the publisher of a seditious periodical work, advertised a new paper, recommending the people to “ persevere in resisting the infernal designs of the ministry, designed to overturn the religion and civil liberties of the country, and introduce popery and slavery.” Mr. Wilkes caused this miscreant to be apprehended, and assisted the military in resisting the inroads of lawless violence.

At the adjourned meeting of parliament, the King, in a short speech from the throne, recapitulated the measures he had adopted, and submitted to each house, copies of the proclamations. All parties concurred in approving His Majesty’s conduct; the only differences in opinion arose from the reflections on the ministry, for not sooner protecting the metropolis by the armed force, and a discussion on the legality of military interference. This important topic was accurately illustrated by Lord Mansfield, whose opinion has ever since been regarded as constitutional law. He disengaged the question from all doubts relative to constructive treason, by proving that the late riots

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Spirited be-
haviour of
Wilkes.

6th June.

19th.
King’s
speech to
Parliament.

Lord Mans-
field’s opi-
nion on
military in-
terference.

^p For this account, besides the periodical publications, in many of which the facts are very accurately narrated; I have consulted *Fanaticism and Treason*; *Considerations on the late Disturbances*, by a consistent Whig; the *State and Behaviour of the English Catholics*; and several other pamphlets: the *Trial of Lord George Gordon*, and the trials of the different rioters; and have received considerable private information.

CHAP. CXXXVIII. amounted to direct acts of high treason. But beside these, the insurgents were guilty of felony, by burning private property, demolishing and robbing houses, and other acts of undisguised violence. This was the true ground of the proclamation for calling out the military. Every man might, and if required by a magistrate, must interfere to suppress a riot; much more to prevent acts of felony, treason, and rebellion. What an individual might do, was lawful to any number of persons assembled for a lawful purpose; it would be needless to prove that magistrates might legally act in a manner not forbidden to other subjects; constables were particularly charged to apprehend persons engaged in breaches of the peace, felony, or treason, and in case of resistance, to attack, wound, and even kill those who continued to resist. A private man seeing another commit an unlawful act might apprehend the offender, and by force compel submission, not to the assailant but to the law, and so might any number of men assembled or called together for the purpose. This doctrine the chief justice stated to be clear and indisputable, with all the possible consequences which might flow from it, and the true foundation for calling in the military to assist in quelling the late riots. The persons who so assisted were, in the contemplation of law, mere private individuals, amenable to the laws of the country, and the wearing of a red coat did not make a man less liable to be called on for his assistance than any other person. If a military man exceeded the powers with which he was invested, he must be tried and punished, not by the martial code, but by the common and statute laws of the realm. Consequently, the idea that the metropolis was under martial law, and that the military had more power since the riots than they had before, was an idle and ill-founded apprehension.

The sentiments of Lord Mansfield, on so important a topic, claimed the utmost attention, and the consideration of his years and sufferings in the late

1780.

unhappy tumults, added to the interest with which he was regarded. In prefacing his opinion, he avowed that he had formed it without having recourse to books, adding the pathetic exclamation, *indeed I have no books to consult*: all his auditors seemed impressed with the sincerest sympathy, and to deplore the loss he had sustained as a national misfortune and disgrace.

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Notwithstanding the prevailing indignation against the late disgraceful excesses, some individuals in the House of Commons pleaded the cause of the associators. Alderman Sawbridge brought up a petition from the common council of the city, which Mr. Wilkes reprobated, as obtained during the height of the disturbances (7th June) and by surprise, when most of the members had departed, in the belief that the business of the day was over. He reproached the lord mayor and alderman Bull for supineness and factiousness. Had the chief magistrate taken proper care of the city, he said, the tumults would have been suppressed in their origin^a; and Bull had countenanced the insurgents, by permitting the constables of his ward to wear the ensign of sedition in their hats; and by appearing publicly, arm-in-arm, with the great instigator of the riots.

City petition
against the
Catholics.

The House resolved itself into a committee for considering the petitions against the tolerating act, which were principally enforced by alderman Bull and Sir Joseph Mawbey. Mr. Burke distinguished himself in favour of toleration, avowing, at the same time, the firmest attachment to the doctrines of the church of England; and on his motion, the House adopted five resolutions, expressive of their satisfaction in the law as it existed; and their abhorrence of the late tumults, as well as the misrepresentations which had given birth to them.

Petitions re-
jected.

^a The lord mayor was prosecuted by the attorney-general for his negligence, and convicted.

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1780.
Bill for pre-
venting
Catholics
from teach-
ing youth :
Rejected.

8th July.
End of the
session.

Political
effect of the
the riots.

As in these debates some apprehensions were expressed relative to the influence which Catholics might acquire by being intrusted with the authorities of tuition, Sir George Savile brought in a bill for depriving them of the right of keeping schools, or receiving youth to board in their houses : it passed the Commons, but was lost in the Lords.

The King terminated the session with a judicious speech, in the conclusion of which he recommended to the members of the House of Commons to assist, by their influence and authority in their several counties, as they had by their unanimous support in parliament, in guarding the peace of the kingdom from further disturbances, and watching over the preservation of public safety. " Make my people sensible," he said, " of the happiness they enjoy, and the distinguished advantages they derive, from our excellent constitution in church and state. Warn them of the hazard of innovation ; point out to them the fatal consequences of such commotions as have lately been excited ; and let it be your care to impress on their minds this important truth ; that rebellious insurrections to resist or reform the laws, must end either in the destruction of the persons who make the attempt, or in the subversion of our free and happy constitution."

The late tremendous hurricane had considerable effect in clearing the political atmosphere : the public opened their eyes to the horrors arising from popular associations to awe, controul, or regulate the proceedings of government, and became sensible that, however innocent or even laudable such efforts might be in their origin, the example was easily capable of being perverted : and unlimited mischief might arise from the perverseness or ignorance of a rash individual giving impulse to so vast a machine as the populace. Favourable intelligence respecting the war contributed to the public satisfaction ; and the personal

rancour which had so long disgraced political contention, was in a great degree tempered by a better knowledge, which the leaders of different parties acquired of the real sentiments by which their opponents were actuated. The meeting of the privy council, at which so many members of opposition attended, produced conferences, and a sort of intercourse between the two parties, which had been suspended during so many important years. The ministry learned that the establishment of a republican system of government, formed no part of the scheme of their adversaries ; and the opposition discovered that, far from desiring to erect despotic power on the ruins of the constitution, the ministry were merely solicitous to sustain what they considered just and necessary rights, and to support what they deemed the legal authorities of government. The mutual benevolence thus introduced into the minds of many leading characters, though not immediately operative, was, afterward, productive of important consequences.

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The rioters in London and Middlesex were arraigned at the Old Bailey. A special commission was issued for trying those in Surrey. The long depending arrangements with Sir Willian De Grey being completed, Mr. Wedderburne took his seat as chief justice of the Common Pleas, being at the same time raised to the peerage, by the title of Lord Loughborough. He was the principal commissioner, and delivered a judicious, eloquent, and impressive charge. No harsh or intemperate zeal for vengeance actuated the judges or influenced the juries at either place : although these juries were composed of men whose property was affected by the fines levied on the counties for reparation of damages, their proceedings were characterized by the humanity of British jurisprudence : no man was convicted but on the fullest testimony ; no plea of extenuation or recommedatory circumstance was disregarded ;

28th June,
Trials of the
rioters.
10th July.

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1780.

and, considering the extent and duration of the riots, the multitude of persons engaged, and the rewards for giving evidence, the number of convictions was remarkably small: few parallels can be found of national indignation so justly excited, and so easily appeased.¹ The sheriffs and other jailors were indemnified by parliament against any actions which might be brought for the escape of prisoners; and the benefits of an act of insolvency were extended to those who, after being set free by the mob, voluntarily surrendered.

Trial of
Lord George
Gordon.

Jan. 1781.

Lord George Gordon was at first totally disregarded in his confinement; he complained of being prevented from seeing his friends, but had the mortification to hear that no friends had enquired for him. He afterward ineffectually petitioned the House of Commons to obtain his discharge. He was tried for high treason, but although some doubts prevailed as to the extent of his criminality, he owed his acquittal principally to the extraordinary zeal and talents of his counsel, Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Erskine. The societies of Glasgow entered into a subscription, and remitted four hundred and eighty-five pounds for his support. He afterward fell rapidly into general disregard, though he made some desperate attempts to attract notice, by attending at St. James's to offer the declarations and resolutions of his associated rabble to the King, and by publishing a letter on the subject of his reception.²

1st Sept.
1780.
Dissolution
of parlia-
ment.

In the autumn, parliament was suddenly dissolved; the elections in some places were conducted with great spirit; in others with remarkable languor. Mr. Fox, after a long contest with Lord Lincoln, was returned for Westminster: Mr. Burke was rejected at Bristol, having lost many friends in consequence of his supporting the trade of Ireland in opposition

¹ At the Old Bailey 85 were tried; of whom 35 were capitally convicted, 7 convicted of single felony, and 43 acquitted. In Surrey 50 were tried, of whom 24 were capitally convicted, and 26 acquitted.

² See Remembrancer, vol. xii. p. 298.

to the instructions of his constituents, which he C H A P. wisely and magnanimously disregarded ; Malton, ^{XXXVIII.} which he had formerly represented, again returned ^{1780.} him, and the humble borough gained, by such a representative, an honour which that great commercial city might reasonably envy.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH.

1780.

Rodney dispatched to relieve Gibraltar. — Captures a Spanish fleet. — Defeats Langara. — Siege and capture of Charlestown in South Carolina. — Clinton's address — and proclamations. — Formation of military force. — Expeditions against the Americans. — Burford defeated by Tarleton. — Clinton quits Carolina. — Proceedings of Lord Cornwallis — Exertions of the Americans. — Treachery in South Carolina. — Gates commands the Americans. — Battle of Camden. — Tarleton defeats Sumter. — Severities of Lord Cornwallis. — Colonel Ferguson routed and killed. — Effect of this disaster. — End of the campaign in Carolina. — Transactions at New York. — Incursion into the Jerseys. — Attack on Bergen Point. — Arrival of reinforcements from France. — Ineffectual attempt on Rhode Island. — Arrival of Rodney in the West Indies. — Ineffectual efforts and skirmishes. — Arrival of a Spanish fleet. — De Guichen returns to Europe. — Rodney to America. — Disappointment of the Americans on the absence of De Guichen — Defection of Arnold. — Fate of Major André. — Arnold's proclamations. — Burgoyne's army at length exchanged. — Naval transactions in Europe. — Capture of the British East and West India fleets. — Quebec fleet taken by the Americans.

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XXXIX.

1780.
Rodney
dispatched
to relieve
Gibraltar.

GIBRALTAR being reduced to the utmost distress for want of provisions, Admiral Rodney was intrusted with the command of a squadron destined for its relief. The judgment and secrecy of this expedition deceived the Bourbon courts: they could not imagine that so strong a force, comprising a part of the channel fleet, would be employed to convoy the transports to the Straits, but conceiving the admiral would separate from them in a certain latitude, selected eleven men of war and two frigates from the grand fleet of Spain, with which Don Juan de Langara proceeded, to intercept the supply.

Rodney had the good fortune, soon after his departure, to take fifteen sail of Spanish merchantmen, with valuable cargoes, a new man of war of sixty-four guns, four frigates, and two smaller armed vessels. He afterward encountered Langara off Cape St. Vincent's, and after a gallant action, maintained during great part of the night, captured the admiral in the *Phœnix* of eighty guns, and three other men of war. Two more had struck, but were driven on shore by tempestuous weather, and one was lost; the *San Domingo* blew up early in the engagement, and every man on board perished. Rodney departed, triumphantly to Gibraltar, and after landing his stores, and affording some relief to Minorca, sailed, agreeably to his original destination, for the West Indies. Admiral Digby returning to England with the Spanish prizes and transports, and the ships belonging to the channel fleet, took the *Prothée*, a French sixty-four, and two vessels laden with military stores, being part of a convoy, the rest of which escaped. Rodney obtained the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, and was complimented with the freedom of the cities of London and Edinburgh.

When the failure of the attack on Savannah, and the departure of the French fleet, removed the impediments to a long projected operation, Sir Henry Clinton sailed from Sandy Hook, to attack Charlestow in South Carolina, with a force of about five thousand men, convoyed by Admiral Arbuthnot, leaving Lieutenant-General Knyphausen to defend New York. The voyage was peculiarly inauspicious; the transports were scattered by a storm; some fell into the hands of the enemy, others were lost; one vessel, containing the heavy ordnance, foundered; all the cavalry, and most of the artillery horses perished, and a passage, which, in fair weather, might have been completed in ten days, was protracted to seven weeks. The General, at one period, despairing of the accomplishment of his original destination, pro-

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1780.

8th Jan.
Captures a
Spanish
fleet.

16th.
Defeats
Langara.

22d Feb.
Digby takes
French
ships.

29th Feb.
and 1st
March.

6th and
15th Mar.

26th Dec.

1779.
Siege and
capture of
Charlestow.

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1780.

jected an expedition to the West Indies, with a view to solicit the sanction of General Vaughan, who held the principal command on that station, in an attack on Porto Rico. A favourable change in the wind, however, enabled him to reach Charlestown, which he invested immediately on his landing.

11th Feb.

The Americans, in consternation, adjourned the assembly of the province, and intrusted their governor, John Rutledge, with all powers except privation of life. The alarm, however was so great, that two proclamations for the militia, and all men of property, to join the army, produced little effect. An attempt to negotiate with the Spanish governor of Havannah for auxiliary ships and troops was also unsuccessful; but by the assistance of French engineers, the works of defence were strengthened and extended, strong abbatiss, deep holes dug at small distances, and a wet ditch raked by redoubts, and protected by a strong citadel, mounting eighty pieces of cannon, guarded the town on every side which was considered assailable. The entrance of the harbour was impeded by the bar, and secured by a squadron of nine sail, under Commodore Whipple, occupying a station called Five-fathom-hole. Fort Moultrie and Sullivan's Island were also improved with new works. Lincoln, the American General placing the whole chance of protecting the province on the fate of the city, shut himself up in it with seven thousand men, resolved to resist to the last extremity.

Sir Henry Clinton, with a due regard to the lives committed to his protection, made methodical approaches; the harbour was blockaded by the fleet, and the troops slowly advancing, and constantly establishing or fortifying posts to maintain communication with the sea, crossed Ashley river, and broke ground before Charlestown, at the distance of eight hundred yards from the works.

3rd April.

20th March.
9th April.

Admiral Arbuthnot had already passed the bar, unopposed by Whipple, who retired to Charlestown,

after having sunk eleven vessels of different descriptions, across the mouth of Cooper river. The admiral, however, with the first fair wind, passed Fort Moultrie without stopping to engage, and anchored near Fort Johnstone.

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1780.

A resolute refusal being returned to a summons to surrender, batteries were opened on the town, and as the advance of Admiral Arbuthnot obviated the necessity of maintaining a communication with the sea, Sir Henry Clinton was enabled to dispatch strong bodies, under Colonels Tarleton and Webster, to cut off the intercourse of the garrison with the country. Tarleton, with no less judgment than activity, surprised the American force at Monk's Corner, routed them with the loss of all their stores, camp-equipage, baggage, and four hundred horses, with their arms and accoutrements; an acquisition of the greatest importance to the British army, while the conquest secured the passage of Cooper River. Clinton was afterward enabled, by the arrival of a reinforcement from New York, to send another detachment across Cooper River, and Lord Cornwallis commanded the whole force.

14th.

Colonel Tarleton's enterprise, joined with the judicious measures of General Clinton, and the able movements of Major Moncrieff, chief officer of the engineers, prevented all communication, and cut off from the garrison all hopes of retreat into the country. The approaches were carried on with vigour, the canal was gained by surprise, and the works advanced to the verge of the ditch, a storm appeared inevitable, and the British flag was already flying on Fort Moultrie. The inhabitants now petitioned General Lincoln to accept terms of capitulation, which he had formerly refused, and a council of war concurring in the measure, the surrender was signed, and the British commander took possession of the town. The Americans were allowed some of the honours of war, but the terms of the capitulation

12th May.

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were, on the whole, sufficiently mortifying. The prisoners amounted to near seven thousand, including the governor, council, military, militia, and about a thousand American and French seamen. The whole naval force was taken or destroyed, with four hundred pieces of ordnance, and a considerable quantity of stores. The cautious proceedings of Sir Henry Clinton are entitled to the highest praise, as they enabled General Lincoln to collect all his force within the town, no part of which could afterward escape. The British officers, in general, were highly extolled, and none more than Major Moncrieff, who, in the defence of Savannah and this attack, shewed the utmost perfection in the science of an engineer, and Captain Elphinstone of the navy, who commanded a division of the fleet, and by his judicious arrangements secured the passage of the rivers Ashley and Cooper. Intelligence of this event, by far the most brilliant of the American war, was received in England just at the close of Lord George Gordon's riot, and greatly contributed to the restoration of calm and happiness at that critical moment.

Alarm of
the Ameri-
cans :

Clinton's
address :

Nor was the alarm of the Americans inferior to the joy of the victors ; their cause seemed abandoned by their new allies, and they despaired of being able to retain the rich and fertile Southern Provinces.^a The judicious measures of Sir Henry Clinton were well adapted to produce this effect, and bring back to loyalty those important colonies. In an address to the inhabitants, he stated, that in consideration of the loyal blood spilt in former well-intended, but ill-timed efforts to assist the King's troops, he had hitherto abstained from exciting the inhabitants to arms. The time was now arrived when every individual might, without apprehension, declare his sentiments ; and it was the duty of every man to assist in restoring peace and good government. It was not his intention to call for unnecessary exertions : but it would be requisite for those who had families, to form a militia, under

^a See the *Crisis*, No. ix. in the *Remembrancer*, vol. x, p. 233.

officers of their own choosing, for the maintenance of peace and good order; while those who had no families should embody for six months, under their own officers, to drive their rebel oppressors from the province, and after the term of service, be freed from all but militia duty. Beside this well conceived address, which was published as a hand-bill, the general issued three proclamations: the first subjected to confiscation the property of all who should appear in arms against the royal government, or compel others to join the enemy, or hinder those inclined to assist the King's forces. The second was a joint proclamation of the general and admiral, as commissioners for restoring peace, promising such of the inhabitants as would return to their allegiance, and to those laws which they formerly boasted as their noblest inheritance, a re-establishment of their former rights and immunities under a free British government, exempt from taxation, except by their own legislature. From these benefits, however, were exempted all who were polluted with the blood of their fellow citizens, wantonly and inhumanly shed under the mock forms of justice, for refusing submission to an usurpation which they abhorred, and adhering to that government with which they deemed themselves inseparably connected. The third proclamation, proceeding on the supposition that peace and good order were restored by the defeat of the American forces, relieved from the state of prisoners on parole, all the inhabitants, except the military, those taken in Fort Moultrie and Charlestown, and those under actual confinement. But those who neglected returning to their allegiance, were to be treated as rebels and enemies. Two hundred and ten of the principal inhabitants of Charlestown, concurred in a congratulatory address, on the restoration of the province to the political connexion with Great Britain. Although the right of taxing by parliament had excited considerable ferment, still they said, the peo-

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22d May.
and pro-
clamations.

1st June.

3d.

5th.

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ple naturally revolted at the idea of independency, which was first promulgated in the northern colonies. They looked back, with painful regret, to convulsions subversive of the British constitution, and productive of rank democracy, which, however carefully digested in theory, had, in practice, exhibited a system of tyrannic domination, only to be found among the uncivilized part of mankind, or in the history of the dark and barbarous ages of antiquity. They regretted the misery and ruin occasioned by the disregard of the King's overtures for accommodation, and would glory in displaying their zeal by efforts for the restoration of felicity under the royal government.^b

Formation
of military
force.Expeditions
against the
Americans.Pursuit of
Burford.

22d May.

27th.

These sentiments were not confined to the subscribers of the address; great numbers assembled in arms, under the direction of Major Ferguson, and the cause of Great Britain appeared triumphant.

Sir Henry Clinton did not, however, rely on these flattering appearances; the situation of affairs demanded his immediate presence at New York, and he had applied to government for his recall; but before his departure, he arranged three expeditions for subduing the interior, and counteracting the enemy. One ascended the Savannah, and another passed the Saluda to Ninety-six; both found the people in general loyal, and disposed to establish the regal government.

The third expedition, commanded by Earl Cornwallis, crossed the Santée river, and marched up the north-east bank, in pursuit of Colonel Burford, who was retreating to North Carolina, with artillery, and waggons containing arms, ammunition, and cloathing. Before the British troops could surmount impediments created by the Americans, Burford had already been retreating ten days. A corps of a hundred and seventy foot, and a hundred mounted infantry, with a three-pounder, was detached in pursuit, under

^b See these papers in the Remembrancer, vol. x. p. 80. et seq.

the spirited and enterprizing Colonel Tarleton, who was invested with discretionary powers. After a pursuit, pressed with great alacrity in a hot climate, Tarleton found himself in the presence of the enemy at Waxhaws, but his troops were enfeebled by a march of a hundred and five miles in fifty-four hours, and greatly out-numbered by the enemy, who had three hundred and eighty infantry, a body of cavalry, and two six-pounders. Both parties formed without interruption, but the ignorance of Burford, and the spirited and well-directed attack of Tarleton, soon decided the fate of the day ; the whole convoy and two hundred prisoners were taken, and a hundred and seventy-two killed.

Intelligence of this success, and of the general prosperity of the province, cheered Sir Henry Clinton in the moment of his departure. His short administration in South Carolina was distinguished for judgment, vigour, and prudence. His manners conciliated many of the inhabitants, while the vigour of his proceedings restrained the turbulent ; and his prudence in establishing commissaries of captures, afforded a seasonable relief to his own army, prevented the complaints of the inhabitants, and proved a source of immense saving to government. Colonel Tarleton speedily rejoined Lord Cornwallis, who was now intrusted with the chief command at the head of four thousand British troops. South Carolina being deemed sufficiently secure, the instructions left with Lord Cornwallis were, “ constantly to regard the safety and tranquillity of Charlestown, as the principal and indispensable objects of his attention. When the necessary arrangements for this purpose were completed, and the season suitable to

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29th May.
Engagement
at Waxhaws.5th June.
Clinton de-
parts.

^c By a mistake in the seventh report of the commissioners of public accounts, the establishment of these commissioners of captures is ascribed to Lord Cornwallis. That nobleman did indeed pursue the measure with ability and integrity, but the regulation originated with Clinton. Although this meritorious officer produced before the commissioners of public accounts, irrefragable documents for the correction of their report, he could never prevail on them to revive, after the peace, so unwelcome a subject as the expenses of the American war.

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 XXXIX. at liberty (if he judged it proper) to make a solid
 1780. move into North Carolina, on condition that it could
 be made without endangering the safety of the posts
 committed to his charge."

Proceedings
of Lord
Cornwallis.

During the delay which occurred from the heat of the climate, and the necessity of forming magazines and securing communications, Lord Cornwallis occupied himself in commercial, military, and civil arrangements at Charlestown. He also sent trusty emissaries into North Carolina, informing the loyalists of his intention to enter that province, and advising them to reap their harvest, collect provisions, and remain in tranquillity till his arrival. These prudential instructions were unfortunately disregarded. A body of loyalists under Colonel More, prematurely assembled in Tryon county, were routed and dispersed. The insurrection formed a pretext for persecution; the jails were filled with pretended traitors, and every day produced new sacrifices to the spirit of revolution. The perils to which this unfortunate class were subjected, compelled a body of eight hundred to leave the province, and join Major M'Arthur at Cheraw Hill, in South Carolina.

Exertions
of the Amer-
icans.

The Americans were encouraged in these vigorous efforts, by the certainty of speedy aid from Virginia, and other provinces, and a detachment from General Washington's army, amounting together to more than six thousand men, beside whom the legislature of Virginia had ordered five thousand, drafted from the militia to serve as a corps of observation. The people of South Carolina, began also to manifest treacherous and turbulent dispositions. The disloyal who had accepted protections, complained of compulsion, and hardly made a secret of their antipathy to the British government, while those who, through principle, had availed themselves of General Clinton's proclamation, were indignant at seeing these scarcely-concealed traitors enjoying immunities, and accumulating advan-

Treachery
in South
Carolina.

tages, which it required nothing but opportunity to turn against the English. Several inconsiderate military promotions enabled these traitors to effect great injury to the cause ; one Lisle, in particular, carried over to the enemy a whole battalion of militia, with their arms and ammunition.

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From these circumstances, and the increase of disloyalty, the proclamation of the third of June has been unjustly censured, as warranting hypocrisy on one hand, and spreading disaffection on the other. It is, however, to be considered, that when the proclamation was issued, the province was considered secure from military invasion, and sufficiently strong to protect itself, if loyally inclined, under the sanction of the British force. The greater number of people in every country are indifferent to forms of government, nor were the mere planters and traders of South Carolina in general, more attached to the American than the British cause. Violent parties of loyalists and revolutionists guided the conduct rather than the sentiments of the wealthy and quiescent. The capture of Charlestown reduced the American party to despair, and the loyalists were equally with their opponents included in the terms of parole in the articles of capitulation. The object of the proclamation was therefore to emancipate the loyal from a needless restraint, to enable those whom the pursuit of wealth and the love of ease would attach to the predominating party, to follow the bent of their dispositions without impediment, while the sturdy and incorrigible rebel, expressly exempted by the letter of the proclamation from the clemency of its provisos, was exposed to the severities which he had been instrumental in inflicting on the loyalists. In all public measures, freedom and security are the principal objects, and that government must be pitifully tyrannical, which affects by general regulations to prevent the unreasonable complaints of party jealousy, or obviate the effects of hypocritical treachery. These ends

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can only be produced by the vigilance, caution, and discernment of those to whom the executive powers are intrusted ; they alone can restrain the artifices of the disloyal, and by the prudent use of authority, prevent the intrusion of traitors into posts of trust.

With the view of conciliating the colony, and establishing the regal government in the hearts of the people, the proclamation was wise and judicious ; no complaint was heard, as in the Jerseys, that those who sought shelter under it were plundered or treated with indignity, and if the arms of Britain had been generally prosperous and her power generally respected, it would undoubtedly have produced beneficial consequences. But at that period, fortune seemed peculiarly malignant. A great force was preparing by the friends of congress, and exaggerated rumours were circulated and generally encouraged of a hostile armament, destined to co-operate with them. Britain was, at the same time, menaced by a hostile confederacy of neutral nations, riot, and insubordination prevailed in Ireland and Scotland ; England was agitated with political discontents, the ministry were alarmed and insecure, and the cause of government, even in the seat of empire, appeared forlorn and helpless. What wonder then that a colony of America, divided among friends and enemies equally violent, and a third party selfish and luke-warm, should prefer the cause of its neighbours, a cause which it had once avowed as its own in preference to the interests of a country opposed in every quarter, and apparently on the verge of domestic civil war ?

Cantonment
of the
British
army.

The principal force on the frontiers of South Carolina was at Camden, under the command of Lord Rawdon, huddled against the heat of the weather ; Major M'Arthur was advanced to Cheraw Hill in the vicinity of the Pedee river, to cover the country between Camden and George Town. The chain to the westward, was connected with Ninety-six by Rocky Mount, a strong post on the Wateree, occupied by

Colonel Turnbull. Colonel Balfour, and afterward Colonel Cruger, commanded at Ninety-six. Major Ferguson's corps, and a body of loyal militia, traversed part of the province between the Wateree and Saluda, and sometimes approached the borders of North Carolina. Lieutenant-colonel Brown held possession of Augusta, the frontier town of Georgia; Savannah was garrisoned by Hessians and Provincials under Colonel Alured Clark. Three regiments, two battalions, and a large detachment of royal artillery, and some corps of Provincials were at Charlestown under Brigadier-General Paterson, and the fatiguing duty of maintaining the communication between the principal posts of this extensive cantonment, was allotted to the legion dragoons. The grand magazine was formed at Camden, but, from the heat of the weather, the supplies were slowly forwarded.

Congress having resolved to exert the most strenuous efforts for the recovery of South Carolina and Georgia, the chief command of their forces in that quarter was given to General Gates, who had gained his reputation at Saratoga; while Colonel Sumter, a refugee after the capture of Charlestown, raised a corps in North Carolina, which was augmented by other fugitives from South Carolina. The collection of such a force rendered it necessary for Major M'Arthur to fall back from Cheraw hill to Camden.

Hostilities were renewed by Colonel Sumter; reinforced by the traitor Lisle, he made an attack on Rocky Mount, but was in three separate attacks repulsed with considerable loss by the steady valour of Colonel Turnbull, and a small garrison. He next assailed the post at Hanging Rock, occupied by a hundred and forty British, and several corps of loyal Provincials, under the command of Major Carden. The Provincials, who were first attacked, gave ground with precipitation, and the British troops nobly sustained the whole weight of the assailants, but superiority of numbers rendered the day doubtful,

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Gates com-
mands the
Americans.

20th July
Attack on
Rocky
Mount.

6th Aug.

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1780.

10th Aug.
Battle of
Camden.

16th.

till forty mounted infantry, on their return from Rocky Mount, by a judicious feint terrified Sumter's corps, and compelled them to retreat in confusion, leaving a hundred killed and wounded. Lord Cornwallis immediately placed Hanging Rock in perfect security by a reinforcement under major Mecan.

Intelligence of the formidable preparations of the enemy, induced Lord Cornwallis to repair to Camden, where the effective force did not exceed two thousand, while that, advancing against them under General Gates, together with the militia led by Caswel, Rutherford, Porterfield, and Baron de Kalbe, amounted to six thousand, exclusive of a thousand under Sumter. Notwithstanding this disparity, the British General marched two hours before midnight to attack the enemy encamped at Clermont in South Carolina ; his front division being commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Webster, and his centre by Lord Rawdon. He had received intelligence that Gates intended to move forward the same night, and at two o'clock in the morning the advanced-guards of both armies met. After a temporary confusion, and some slight skirmishes, both, as if by compact, betook themselves to repose, awaiting the dawn. On reconnoitring, Lord Cornwallis found his situation extremely eligible ; a swamp on either hand preserved him from being out-flanked, while the narrowness of the front diminished the advantage of superior numbers, on the side of the enemy.

At dawn, both armies formed in two divisions, but General Gates attempting to change the situation of two brigades of militia, Lord Cornwallis commenced a well-judged, rapid, and effectual attack. The American militia were broken, threw down their arms, and fled; the other division, and the reserve, maintained nevertheless a resolute and honourable conflict, but Colonel Webster, instead of pursuing the fugitives, wisely directed the efforts of his division against them; the cavalry under Major Hanger and Colonel Tarleton poured in with irresistible impetuosity, and de-

terminated the fate of the day. Rout and confusion could not be more complete; during a pursuit of twenty-two miles, the cavalry found the ground strewed with arms, and men whom fatigue prevented from further flight. All the baggage, stores, and camp equipage, together with seven pieces of cannon, fell into the hands of the victors. Upward of eight hundred were slain, and among a thousand captured, was the Baron de Kálbe, mortally wounded.

This important victory reflected great honour on the whole British army, in which Lord Cornwallis, and Lord Rawdon then only twenty-five years of age, conspicuously shared. The advantages were rendered complete by the surprise of Sumter, whom Colonel Tarleton, with his usual ability and expedition, overtook at Catawba ford, on the verge of a friendly settlement. With no more than a hundred dragoons, and sixty of the light infantry, he vanquished more than eight hundred Americans, killing and wounding a hundred and fifty, and taking three hundred. He also rescued two hundred and fifty prisoners, and recaptured several waggons laden with rum and other stores, which Colonel Sumter had taken in the course of his expedition; and all the provincial stores, ammunition, baggage, artillery and a thousand stand of arms, rewarded the valour and diligence of the conquerors.

Lord Cornwallis, awaiting the supplies requisite for his expedition into North Carolina, sought to restrain the perfidy of the Americans by severe edicts. The provocation was abundant, if the measure was wise. His lordship sequestered the estates of all who opposed the re-establishment of the royal government in South Carolina; death was denounced against those who, after receiving British protections, joined the enemy; some of the most hardened were executed; and many persons of superior rank, who being allowed the benefit of parole in Charlestown, had maintained a traitorous correspondence with General Gates, were

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Tarleton
routs
Sumter.
18th Aug.

Severities
of Lord
Cornwallis.

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8th Sep.
Major
Ferguson
routed.

9th Oct.

shipped off to St. Augustine in East Florida, and again allowed their parole, but under proper restrictions. The opinion formed of these measures depended too much on subsequent events; could the British have retained their ascendancy, the punishments were merciful rather than severe, but in the course of succeeding transactions, they afforded a pretext of retaliation, which was urged to the full extent of the precedent.

At this period, Lord Cornwallis prepared a judicious plan for overpowering all opposition in North Carolina; he penetrated through the hostile settlement of Waxhaws, to a town called Charlotte. One part of his plan was to detach Major Ferguson with a corps of about a thousand loyal militia, for the purpose of approaching the frontiers: the service was important; but the militia, unsupported by regulars, could not be sufficiently relied on. Colonel Clarke, an inhabitant of Georgia, had collected a force, and made an unsuccessful attack on Augusta. Ferguson hoped to intercept his retreat, and for that purpose advanced near the mountains, where he was encountered by a select body of backwoodsmen, amounting to fifteen hundred. These men were almost in a savage state, collected with various views under different commanders, well mounted, unincumbered, and armed with rifles. They overtook Major Ferguson at King's Mountain: he defended himself with great skill and valour, but their mode of fighting prevented success. They attacked in different quarters, and wherever the Major presented his front, the opposing party fled from the bayonet; but another corps at the same moment advanced and assailed his rear. After maintaining this unequal combat during an hour, he received a mortal wound; his men were disheartened, and his successor reluctantly surrendered. The victors, with characteristic inhumanity, maltreated the corpse of the dead commander, hanged several of the prisoners, and treated others with detestable cruelty.

This fatal disaster disconcerted the plans of Lord Cornwallis. Although abundantly supplied with provisions at Charlotte, he sustained great inconvenience from the inveterate hostility of the natives, and therefore gladly retreated for the protection of South Carolina, deferring the prosecution of his enterprize till he should receive some expected reinforcement from Sir Henry Clinton. This interval was employed by Colonel Tarleton in checking the inroads of an American partisan named Marion, who after the retreat of the mountaineers, infested the province.

Colonel Sumter, having again collected a force, effected a junction with Clarke and Brannen, commanders of straggling parties, and projected an attack on Ninety-six. Colonel Tarleton was recalled from his expedition against the eastern parts of the province to oppose this force, and pursuing his object with his accustomed celerity, would have effected a surprise, had not Sumter been informed of his danger by a deserter. Tarleton, however, learning his retreat, overtook him at Blackstock's Hill, with a detachment of eighty cavalry, and without waiting for the arrival of the infantry, gallantly assailed a force greatly superior, wounded the commander, and dispersed his troop. The fact of Tarleton's being victor is disputed; but all the benefits of victory undoubtedly resulted from this exploit.

The defeat of Major Ferguson not only frustrated the hopes which Lord Cornwallis had entertained, of being joined by a considerable body of loyalists, but animated the insurgents in both Carolinas. The ill-success of General Gates at Camden, was a sufficient motive with congress for superseding him, although the measure was accompanied with personal civilities; General Greene was his successor, but no transaction of importance marked the residue of the campaign.^d

^d Beside the other histories, I have consulted Tarleton's History of the campaigns of 1780 and 1781, Mackenzie's Strictures, Ramsay's History of the Revolution of South Carolina, and the pamphlets published by Lord Cornwallis and Sir Henry Clinton, and have received much private information.

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Effect of
this dis-
aster.November.
Tarleton
disperses
Sumter's
forces.

20th Nov.

End of the
campaign.

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1780.

Transactions
at New York.

During the absence of the commander in chief, and after his return, no remarkable military exploit was performed in the vicinity of New York. The winter was severe beyond all precedent; the rivers, and even arms of the sea, were covered with ice sufficiently thick to admit the passage of the heaviest artillery. The city was thus deprived of the defence arising from an insular situation, and reduced to great extremities for want of provisions and fuel. General Knyphausen adopted vigorous and judicious measures of protection; but General Washington was not in a condition to venture an attack. His army was also in extreme distress; their force weakened by the large detachments sent to Charlestown, and the remaining regiments mutinous, through famine and despair. Thus mutual weakness occasioned mutual safety. No enterprise was attempted till the breaking up of the frost, except an unsuccessful attack by the American Lord Sterling, against Staten Island, and an expedition to a post called Young's House, in the neighbourhood of White Plains, which was gallantly stormed by Colonel Morton, forty of the enemy killed, and ninety captured.

January.

2d Feb.

7th June.
Incursions.
into the
Jerseys.

General Knyphausen having received information that the American army was generally mutinous, and the inhabitants of the Jerseys desirous to re-establish the ancient government, detached a considerable force under Generals Matthew and Sterling. They landed at Elizabeth-town, but found the militia prepared for resistance, and the mutiny in the army confined to loud complaints against want and hardship, but not calculated to produce a revolt to the British government. The Generals, perceiving no hopes of accomplishing their intentions, remained a few days on the island to avoid the disgraceful imputation of flight, and were joined by Sir Henry Clinton, in his return from Charlestown. Although displeased at the premature and unexpected effort which frustrated a combined movement he had in contemplation, he co-ope-

rated in an attack on Springfield, which was captured and burnt, and then returned to New York.

General Washington detached General Wayne with two thousand men, to attack Bergen Point, and carry off the cattle reserved for supplying the British army. Seventy men stationed in a blockhouse, protected by abatis, repulsed this disproportionate force, killed more than their whole number, took several prisoners, and recaptured part of the cattle.

Meanwhile, a long expected reinforcement from France arrived at Rhode Island: it consisted of six thousand troops commanded by the Comte de Rochambeau, and seven sail of the line, five frigates, and five smaller armed vessels, under M. de Ternay. To prevent jealousy, the French government, with liberal policy, raised Washington to the rank of lieutenant-general in their armies, and thus placed M. de Rochambeau under his command.

Sir Henry Clinton having received indisputable information of the destination of this armament, proposed to Admiral Arbuthnot a plan for landing some British troops at Rhode Island, while the fleet blocked up the French squadron; a measure which, if promptly executed, would have brought the whole force, naval and military, into imminent danger. The admiral at first declined it, in hopes of meeting the enemy at sea, and afterward deferred co-operation till they had fortified themselves at Rhode Island, and the expedition was not undertaken till too late a period to succeed. Sir Henry Clinton proceeded with eight thousand men to Huntingdon Bay on Long Island, but Admiral Arbuthnot, having viewed the position of the French fleet, declared it unassailable; and General Washington, being now considerably reinforced, moved to Peek's Kill, intending to attack New York. Clinton, mortified and disappointed, fell back for the protection of his head-quarters, while Washington drew off his forces, and retired, to avoid a general action.

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1780.
Springfield
taken.
Attack on
Bergen
Point.

10th July.
Arrival of
reinforce-
ment from
France.

Ineffectual
attempt on
Rhode
Island.

13th Aug.

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Naval pro-
ceedings in
the West
Indies.

25th Mar.

As the further proceedings of the combined armies depended on the arrival of the French fleet from the West Indies, it becomes necessary to recapitulate transactions in that quarter. During winter, the British navy annoyed the commerce of the enemy, and maintained a gallant and successful struggle against superior strength and numbers. The most remarkable naval action occurred between Captain Cornwallis, commanding a ship of sixty-four guns, one of fifty, and one of forty-four, against a French force, consisting of four seventy-fours and two frigates. The engagement was continued during two whole days: on the third, at the appearance of another British ship of war and a frigate, the French commander made his escape.

27th Mar.
Arrival of
Rodney.

The arrival of Admiral Rodney rendered the British nearly equal to the French fleet; but the skill and spirit of the valiant admiral gave a decided superiority. The Count De Guichen had appeared off St. Lucie, but was deterred from making an attack, by the judicious disposition of the naval and military force; and in return, Rodney braved him during two successive days off Fort Royal, Martinique; but was unable to draw him from his place of refuge.

2d April.

5th April.

Sir George Rodney having returned to St. Lucie, de Guichen ventured out of port with twenty-three ships of the line. The British admiral pursued with twenty sail, and in two days brought him to action, and compelled him to seek shelter in Guadaloupe. Rodney appears to have been dissatisfied with some of his officers, who, not rightly understanding his signals, did not support him sufficiently, as his flagship, the Sandwich, was for a considerable time exposed alone to a disproportioned fire. Another unimportant encounter afterward took place, but the French availed themselves of their superiority in sailing, to avoid a decisive action.

15th and
19th May.Arrival of a
Spanish
fleet.

Failing in these efforts to bring on a general engagement, Rodney occupied a windward station, for the purpose of intercepting a Spanish squadron from

Cadiz; but the admiral, Don Solano, prudently kept to northward of the usual track, and, instead of proceeding to Martinique, put in at Guadaloupe, where he was joined by De Guichen. This reinforcement consisted of twelve sail of the line, beside frigates, and eighty-three transports, conveying twelve thousand troops, with a proportionate train of artillery. But this great superiority of force was unavailing; pestilence raged among the transports, and discord arose between the admirals. Solano repaired to the Havannah, and De Guichen, retiring to St. Domingo, convoyed the homeward-bound trade to Europe. Rodney, deceived by this unexpected proceeding, sailed with eleven ships of the line and four frigates, to the coast of America, where he expected again to encounter his old opponent.

The allied American and French army were not less surprised by this movement than the British admiral. In confident expectation of effectual aid from De Guichen, great preparations had been made for expelling the English from New York; but a new system of operation now becoming necessary, an interview was effected between General Washington and the French commanders, at Hartford in Connecticut, situated in the mid-way between the two camps.

In this interval occurred one of the most extraordinary incidents of the war. General Arnold was, from his talents and approved valour, considered a chief supporter of the American cause: he embraced it with enthusiasm, and from the commencement of hostilities, had, by his activity and genius, rendered essential services, at least equal to any other person engaged. He was descended from one of the best families in New England; his ancestor, Benedict Arnold, being the first governor of Rhode Island. The superiority of his address and attainments rendered him an object of suspicion and dislike to the less refined members of congress. After the evacuation of Canada in 1776, his merits were treated with disregard;

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1780.

Disagree-
ments of the
allied admi-
rals.

5th July.
De Guichen
returns to
Europe.
Rodney goes
to America.

Effect of
these mea-
sures in
America.

Defection of
Arnold.

C H A P. he was overlooked in a list of promotions, and sub-
 XXXIX. jected to the command of those who had been his in-
 1780. feriors. His accounts were at the same time left in an
 unsettled state, and reports propagated injurious to his
 character for integrity. In vain he solicited redress,
 and the appointment of a committee to revise his ac-
 counts; in vain General Washington interested him-
 self in his behalf, and proved the justice of his requests,
 displaying with proper warmth his merits, "as a judi-
 cious, brave officer, of great activity, enterprize, and
 perseverance;" congress seemed resolved on the dis-
 grace of Arnold, and therefore did not take any mea-
 sures for the adjustment of his demands. After ren-
 dering several intermediate services, particularly by
 the sagacious advice which enabled Washington to
 effect the surprize of Trenton, Arnold was employed
 under Gates against Burgoyne; but notwithstanding
 his subordinate station, his activity and judgment di-
 rected the most important proceedings; he was con-
 sidered in the British camp as the efficient com-
 mander of the opposing army, and his promptitude in
 changing the disposition of a part of the American
 troops, unauthorized by General Gates, was a prin-
 cipal cause of the capture of the British army. His
 conduct in this situation was not exempt from cavil;
 but the brilliancy of his achievements silenced for a
 time the clamours of malevolence. On the evacua-
 tion of Philadelphia he was placed in an official si-
 tuation for the protection of property and securing
 that which was confiscated. Here his style of liv-
 ing was imputed to him as a crime; he received the
 French plenipotentiary, lodged and entertained him
 in a manner which disgusted the parsimonious
 Americans; the circumstances of his fortune were
 minutely investigated, and stated to be unequal
 to the splendour of his establishment; reports were
 spread that he had irretrievably deranged his af-

⁵ See Washington's letter to congress, dated 12th May, 1777, in Washington's Letters, vol. ii. p. 72. The document is of considerable importance in estimating the character of Arnold, and the conduct of congress toward him.

fairs by desperate and unsuccessful exertions in C H A P. trade and privateering ; and he was accused of peculation. At the same time, the freedom with which he had expressed himself against the alliance with France, was implacably remembered. When his character was rendered suspicious and odious by such means, and his military exploits no longer the objects of immediate consideration, congress referred his accounts to a board of commissioners, who rejected above half his demands ; General Arnold appealed against their decision to a committee of congress ; but their report was still more disadvantageous. It is also asserted that he was tried by a court-martial for embezzling national property, and reprimanded in public by General Washington, in pursuance of the sentence.^f This account, however, appears, highly improbable, considering that Washington continued to repose in him the most implicit confidence, leaving in his charge the important post of West Point in the high-lands on the North river, essential to the communication between the northern and middle colonies, and denominated, from its unassailable strength, the Gibraltar of North America.

General Arnold solicited the command of this post only with the view of rendering an eminent service to the English. He had been in correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton eighteen months, and in that period had supplied much valuable information. He commenced the communication by declaring his resolution to renounce the American cause in consequence of the French alliance, requiring only personal safety, and indemnity for the property he must sacrifice. Clinton readily embraced his proposal, hoping that by some signal and adequate benefit he would make atonement for the injuries he had done his country. The moment now seemed to have arrived, as the surrender of West Point, and its de-

Fate of Major And^rt.

^f See Remembrancer, vol. xi. p. 100.

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21st Sept.

22d Sept.

pendent posts, would have been a fatal blow to the American cause. A negotiation was accordingly commenced, and when the project was ripe for execution, Major André, Adjutant-General of the British army, an officer in whose prudence and address Sir Henry Clinton reposed the greatest confidence, and who had chiefly conducted the correspondence between him and General Arnold, was commissioned to adjust the final arrangement.^g He was conveyed from the Vulture sloop by night, in a boat dispatched by Arnold, landed on neutral ground, and held a conference with him till the approach of day. The American General, fearful of discovery, advised Major André not to return on board the Vulture, but conveyed him to a place of concealment within the American lines, where he remained till night. During the day, the sloop had shifted her position, and the boatmen refusing to convey André on board, he was compelled to attempt reaching New York by land; and, by the direction of Arnold, changed his regimentals for a plain suit, and received a passport under the name of John Anderson. In all these particulars he acted in contradiction to the express injunctions of his general, who charged him not, on any account, to change his name or dress, or possess himself of writings by which the nature of his embassy might be traced; all which Major André had the candour to avow after he had been arrested, in a letter to Sir Henry Clinton, full of gratitude and respect^h: but Arnold's life had already been endangered by the failure of a plan for meeting, and a repugnance to expose him again to similar hazard, probably swayed Major André.

23d Sept.

Protected by the passport, he had already passed the lines, and conceived himself free from danger, when a patrol of three men sprang from a wood, and seized his horse. In a moment of surprise the unfor-

^g Major André volunteered his services, and was permitted to go on the enterprise much against the inclination of Sir Henry Clinton.

^h See this well-written and most affectionate letter, Annual Register for the same year.

tunate André inquired of the soldiers “ whence they came ? ” and to their answer “ from below,” replied, “ and so am I,” avowing himself to be a British officer. He discovered his error too late ; the captors searched him, and finding several papers concealed in various parts of his dress, carried him before their commander, resisting the offers of his watch and money, and promises of future advantages, if they would accompany him to New York.

During his examination before the American Colonel of militia, Major André continued his assumed name of John Anderson, and had sufficient address to obtain the transmission of a letter to Arnold, who escaped to the British head-quarters. The captive had now no further occasion for disguise ; he wrote to General Washington a full and frank statement of the circumstances which occasioned his being within the American lines, exculpating himself from the imputation of being a spy, and demanding “ whatever might be his fate a decent treatment.”

General Washington referred the case to a board of fourteen general officers, all Americans, except La Fayette and the baron de Stuben, before whom Major André was compelled to appear. The facts alleged against him were chiefly drawn from his own letters, and supported by his own answers to interrogatories unfairly administered, while he was, by situation, precluded from the advantage of adducing explanatory testimony ; the board reported, that, agreeably to the law and usage of nations, he ought to suffer death as a spy.

From the moment of his capture no exertions were spared to avert his fate. Colonel Robinson, commander of the loyal Americans, and Sir Henry Clinton, who was sincerely attached to Major André, wrote to General Washington, affirming that he had been sent to confer, under a flag of truce. General Arnold certified the same fact, and further in-

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1780.

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CHAP. sisted that every subsequent proceeding had been
 XXXIX. sanctioned by his authority, which he had a right to
 1780. exercise according to his discretion. These letters
 were produced before the board of officers ; but a
 previous question was artfully put to the captive,
 who in answer is said to have denied coming on
 shore with a flag of truce.ⁱ

30th Sept.

After promulgation of the sentence, Sir Henry Clinton deputed Lieutenant-General Robertson, with Andrew Elliot, Esquire, and the honourable William Smith, governor and chief justice of New York, to state such facts as could not be disclosed to the board. General Washington would not receive them, but appointed General Greene, president of the court which condemned Major André, to meet General Robertson, the person who accompanied him not being permitted to land. In this conference, General Robertson pleaded the cause of humanity, urged the friendship of the commander in chief toward the object of intercession, the hazard many Americans would incur in case of retaliation, and the previous moderation of Sir Henry Clinton, who on several occasions had shewn the most humane attention to General Washington's intercession in favour of avowed spies, and had still in his power many delinquents. General Robertson offered to prove, by unexceptionable testimony, that Major André went on shore in a boat, bearing a flag of truce, with the knowledge, and under the protection of General Arnold, who was commander of the district^k ; and he strongly urged the injustice of considering Major André as a spy, merely on the foundation of an improper phrase in a letter to General Washington. None of these arguments or proposals had the desired effect ; and an offer to exchange for the intended victim, any prisoner whom the Americans should

ⁱ The fact of André having given such an answer is only proved by the report published by congress : but it may reasonably be doubted, considering their report to be the only one extant, and that the prisoner had neither advocate, witness, nor friend on the spot.

^k This uncontradicted assertion of the same fact, after the decision of the board of officers, renders André's pretended confession additionally doubtful.

select, was equally disregarded. Finding his arguments and offers encountered by an insurmountable obstinacy, which might be attributed to the rancour of the contest, General Robertson proposed a reference to disinterested foreigners, acquainted with the laws of war and of nations, and indicated Generals Knyphausen and Rochambeau ; but this candid proposition was not complied with. A letter written by General Arnold, repeating his explanations of Major André's situation, and threatening retaliation if the sentence against him was executed, produced, as might be expected, no good effect ; every sentiment of humanity and policy was absorbed in the base desire of revenge : General Washington justified the decision of the board ; and, to their indelible disgrace, no French officer interfered, in a cause so interesting to a polite and humane people ; on the contrary, La Fayette urged the fate of the unfortunate captive with characteristic malignity.

The compassion which was banished from the breasts of the superior officers, was amply displayed by the subalterns and privates of the American, and by all ranks of the British army. They could not contemplate, without sensible emotion, a youth in the prime of life, brave, amiable, and highly accomplished, doomed to an ignominious death, for an act which could not be imputed to a dishonourable motive, and which if it might, by forced construction, subject him to sentence as a spy, left nevertheless a wide and honourable distinction between his conduct, and that usually pursued by persons in the like situation. The whole behaviour of this amiable officer was distinguished by magnanimity, and jealous regard for his reputation. During his examination, for it could not be called a trial, he studiously avoided every disclosure which might affect the interests or characters of those with whom he had been engaged. He received the sentence without alarm or dejection, acknowledged the politeness with which he was treat-

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CHAP. ed during his captivity, and only solicited the sad
 XXXIX. privilege of dying by the musket like a soldier, and
 1780. not by the cord like a common felon. Uninformed
 2d Oct. whether his request would be granted or not, he
 walked with firmness, composure, and dignity, to-
 ward the place of execution, arm-in-arm with the
 officers of his guard. At sight of the preparations
 which announced the disgrace reserved for his final
 moments ; he exclaimed with emotion, “must I then
 die in this manner !” — but soon recovering his com-
 posure, he added, “ it will be but a momentary
 pang.” With an unruffled countenance, he ascended
 the cart, desiring that the spectators would at-
 test his courage at the great moment of the termina-
 tion of his existence¹. In the opinion of all libe-
 ral and generous-minded men, the manner of the ex-
 ecution was infinitely more disgraceful to Washington
 and La Fayette, than to the unhappy sufferer. His
 general, Sir Henry Clinton, never ceased to lament
 the unworthy fate of this amiable and accomplished
 young man, who was adorned with the rarest endow-
 ments of nature and of education, and (had he
 lived) could not but have attained to the highest
 honours of his profession.

7th Oct.
 Arnold's
 proclama-
 tion.

Arnold was promoted to the rank of brigadier-
 general in the British service. In vindication of his
 conduct, he issued “ an address to the inhabitants
 of America,” in which he unfolded the factious and
 false pretences by which congress had effected the
 separation of the colonies from the mother-country,
 and established an arbitrary tyranny over the lives
 and property of their fellow-subjects ; while with ab-
 ject meanness they crouched before the emissaries of
 France, their natural enemy, who had neither will
 or power to protect them. He considered the war, on
 the part of America, defensive, till France joined in

¹ See the papers, letters, &c. on this subject in the Remembrancer, vol. xi. p. 1.
 and 101.

the combination ; but denied that when the second proposals were made by British commissioners, America was entangled in the alliance with that country. The overtures were avowed by the whole continent to exceed the wishes and expectations of the people, and if suspicion of the national sincerity existed, it could be founded only on the extreme liberality of the offers. He lamented the impolicy, tyranny and contemptuous injustice, with which congress had studiously neglected taking the collective sentiments of the people on the British propositions, as a dangerous sacrifice of the great interests of America, to the partial views of a proud, ancient and crafty foe. The pretended treaty of Versailles amounted only to an overture, the people of America had given no authority to conclude it, nor had they ever sanctioned its ratification ; even the articles of confederation were not yet signed. Preferring, therefore, the sincere overtures of Great Britain, to the insidious offers of France, he had determined to retain his arms and command only till an opportunity should occur of surrendering them, and accomplishing an event of decisive importance, which in its execution would prevent the effusion of blood. The great political truths contained in this address were not capable of refutation ; but the general's account of his own conduct and motives was examined with great severity.^m

In a subsequent proclamation, addressed "to the officers and soldiers of the continental army, who have the real interest of their country at heart, and who are determined no longer to be the tools and dupes of congress or of France," General Arnold made strong appeals to the interest, necessities, and prejudices of his countrymen. He offered those who would join the British standard, rank, bounty, and liberal allowance for their horses, arms, and accoutrements. He imputed their distress, want of pay,

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^m See Remembrancer, vol. x. p. 344. vol. xi. p. 100.

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hunger and nakedness, to the negligent contempt and corruption of congress. America, he observed, was now only a land of widows, orphans, and beggars, and should the parent nation cease her exertions, no security would remain for enjoying the consolations of that religion for which the ancestors of the people had braved the ocean, the heathen and the wilderness. He himself had lately seen the mean and profligate congress at mass for the soul of a Roman Catholic in purgatory, and participating in the rites of a church, against whose anti-christian corruptions, the pious ancestors of the Americans would have witnessed with their blood.ⁿ Contrary to all expectation, this proclamation produced no effect: the necessities of the American army were not relieved, but shame and indignation produced a decisive conduct; the ambition of sustaining a respectable character in company with their new associates the French, contributed to give energy to the dictates of patriotism, and from this period, the desertions so frequently complained of occurred no more.^o

Exchange of
Burgoyne's
army.

No military transaction of note distinguished the remainder of the campaign; but the exchange of the British army, captured at Saratoga was at length accomplished. The perfidious policy of congress toward these brave men, had long been undefended even by their warmest partisans, and the American prisoners taken at Charlestown, had friends sufficient-ly numerous and clamorous to compel their rulers to an act of justice, so shamefully evaded and delayed.

Naval trans-
actions in
Europe.

May.
July.

In the European seas, several gallant and spirited actions redounded to the glory of the British flag. Beside these, Admiral Geary, who succeeded to the command of the Channel fleet on the death of Sir Charles Hardy, made prize of twelve French mer-

ⁿ See the proclamation, *Remembrancer*, vol. xi. p. 20. It can now be considered only on the level of an ordinary recruiting hand-bill; although it once derived, from the character and circumstances of the author, a momentary celebrity.

^o *Ramsay*, vol. ii. p. 204.

chantmen, part of a convoy from Port-au-Prince. This advantage was overbalanced by the capture of more than forty East and West India ships, which fell into the hands of the combined French and Spanish squadrons, and were carried into Cadiz. The value of the acquisition was very large, and peculiarly injurious to the British interests, as it comprised military stores essential to the defence of the settlements. The number of prisoners was two thousand eight hundred and sixty-five: and the event occasioned the most lively exultation in the enemy, and proportionate dissatisfaction in England: the mode of employing the channel fleet was severely arraigned, and Admiral Geary soon resigned the command; which being refused by Admiral Barrington, was conferred on Admiral Darby.

The Americans too were not without their share of naval success; some of their privateers intercepted the outward-bound Quebec fleet, off the banks of Newfoundland; and though several vessels were afterward re-captured, secured fourteen valuable ships.

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1780.

9th Aug.

Capture of
the British
East and
West India
fleet.Quebec fleet
taken by the
Americans.

CHAPTER THE FORTIETH:

1780—1781.

Meeting of the new parliament — election of a speaker — King's speech — debates on the addresses. — Rise and progress of the dispute between Great Britain and Holland. — Account of the armed neutrality. — Laurens taken. — Discovery of a treaty between Holland and America — war declared — message to parliament — appointment of delegates. — Burke's plan of economy renewed — first speech of the honourable William Pitt — the bill rejected — other popular efforts. — Sheridan's motion respecting the military. — Petition of the delegates. — Motions respecting Sir Hugh Palliser — and for a committee on the American war. — Close of the session.

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XL.

1780.
31st Oct.
Meeting of
parliament.
Election of a
speaker.

ON the meeting of the new parliament the election of a speaker occasioned a strenuous debate. The hostility of Sir Fletcher Norton during the last session precluded him from the hope of nomination by the ministry. Lord George Germaine, lamenting that the declining health of the late speaker rendered him no longer capable of so laborious an office, proposed William Wolfran Cornwall to fill the chair.

Sir Fletcher Norton, in answer to these insincere condolences, declared, that his health was perfectly re-established, and complained of the unkind treatment which he experienced from administration, after having, at their request, retained so laborious a situation during two whole sessions, contrary to the advice of his physicians, and at the peril of his life. The members of opposition insisted that Sir Fletcher Norton was sacrificed to ministerial resentment, chiefly on account of his memorable address to the King, and divided the House on his re-election, which

was negative.^a He was, however, gratified by a vote of C H A P.
XL. thanks for his conduct, which was conveyed to him, in flattering terms, by his successor.

The King, in his speech, expressed unusual satisfaction in meeting parliament at a period, when the late elections would supply certain information of the wishes and disposition of the people, to which he was always inclined to pay the utmost attention and regard. He complained of the unprovoked aggression of the Bourbon family; but hoped the late successes in Georgia and Carolina would be attended with important consequences in bringing the war to a happy conclusion. Safe and honourable terms of peace could only be secured by such powerful and respectable preparations as would show in Great Britain a firm resolution not to receive the law from any powers whatever, and to decline no difficulty or hazard, in defending the country, and preserving its essential interests. His Majesty declared his entire confidence in the zeal and affections of parliament; conscious that, during his whole reign, the constant object of his care and wish of his heart, had been to promote the true interests and happiness of all his subjects, and to preserve inviolate the constitution, both in church and state.

In the Upper House an amendment was moved on the address, but the debate was not distinguished by novelty or vigour^b. The amendment in the Commons was more ably supported; though the discussion was not so interesting as on many similar occasions. The friends of administration inferred topics of consolation from the heterogeneous combination of France and Spain with America; the impossibility of cordiality in such an union, or of happy results to a cause, supposed to be that of liberty and the Protestant religion, when protected only by bigoted Catholics, and powers from whose vocabulary the word freedom was expunged. It was represented as a

1780.
20th Nov.
1st Feb.
1781.
1st Nov.
1780.
King's
Speech.

1st Nov.
Debates on
the address.

6th Nov.

^a 203 to 134.

^b The division was 68 to 23.

CHAP. great advantage that England was without allies ;
XL. since no league against a power compact within it-
1780. self, and combining its energies by unanimity of
council, had ever yet been crowned with success.
The contest with America was represented as more
prosperous than at any previous period since the
convention of Saratoga.

General Smith denied the assertion : the circum-
stances of the country, he said, were infinitely worse ;
and, since the affair of Trenton, every military man
had clearly discerned that all attempts to subdue
America were fruitless prodigalities of blood and
treasure. Mr. Fox admired the gallantry and good
conduct of Lord Cornwallis and his officers at Cam-
den ; but would not thank even his own brother,
who was at that period serving in America, for lau-
rels gathered in a war which he hated and de-
testested, regarding it as the fountain head of all the
mischief and calamities which oppressed this miser-
able nation. He ridiculed the hopes expressed in
the speech, founded on the late victories. Expecta-
tion had been equally ardent when the Americans
were defeated at Long Island ; the battle of Brandy-
wine was expected to occasion the immediate re-
duction of all the provinces, and extermination of
American rebellion ; and the capture of Ticonderoga
had produced hopes no less extravagant. Events had
constantly belied these sanguine predictions ; and
yet, in spite of experience, parliament were taught to
anticipate glorious consequences, if the late successes
in Carolina were pursued with vigour. To him the
capture of Charlestown conveyed only the alarming
certainty that ministers were deceived in believing
the majority of the Americans friendly to the British
government. The people of Carolina, notwith-
standing their oaths, had flocked, even with their
arms, to the standard of Gates. Every gleam of suc-
cess had hitherto been the forerunner of misfor-
tune : the loss of the whole army succeeded the
capture of Ticonderoga ; the evacuation of Phila-

delphia followed another success ; and no sooner was the surrender of Charlestown announced than a new disaster was expected, and in part experienced, in the loss of Rhode Island, the only good winter harbour in all America. He had no objection to that part of the address which congratulated His Majesty on a late addition to his family. Long might his domestic enjoyments increase ; they were the only enjoyments he possessed. Unfortunate in every other respect ; unfortunate abroad, and unfortunate in the conduct of civil affairs at home, he was happy, and entitled to congratulation in private life. Mr. Fox would not acknowledge the blessings enjoyed under His Majesty's government. "How long," he exclaimed, "shall the sacred shield of Majesty be interposed for the protection of a weak administration ? The word is made subservient to every legerdemain trick, and every illusion dictated by convenience. If by the blessings of His Majesty's reign are understood the personal virtues of the sovereign, I am ready to acknowledge them with respect, and with reverence ; but, if the phrase implies the acts and projects of his ministers, I detest and reprobate them : the whole reign has been one continued series of disgrace, misfortune, and calamity." He then descended with great severity on the manner of dissolving the late parliament ; and compared the famous vote respecting the influence of the crown, to the death-bed confessions and mock penitence of other abandoned profligates, who, in their last moments, admonished others to avoid those courses which occasioned a premature and untimely end.

The amendment was negative.^c No other business of importance was discussed till the recess ; the ordinary transactions of supply, the suspension of the habeas corpus, the incidental complaints respecting returns, and votes of thanks to the commanders in America, engaging the principal attention of the House.

6th Dec.

^c 212 to 130.

C H A P.

XL.

1777.

Dispute
with Hol-
land.1775.
Conduct of
that power.

21st Feb.

1777.
First memo-
rial of Sir
Joseph
Yorke.26th Mar.
1777.
Answer.

The time was now arrived when Great Britain was to rank Holland, her ancient ally, among the number of her declared enemies.

At the commencement of hostilities between Great Britain and her colonies, Holland, in conformity with the conduct of other European powers, forbade the export of ammunition and stores for one year; but when the success of the colonists, and the declaration of independence, afforded flattering hopes of acquiring a portion of that commerce which the English had hitherto monopolized, Holland began to grasp at the advantage and encouraged an illicit trade with America. Every motive arising from long and beneficial alliance, similarity in religion, and political interests, combined to deter Holland from a mode of conduct repugnant to the interests of Great Britain: but a faction, in the French interest, and inimical to the Stadtholder, influenced all the proceedings of government. The open encouragement afforded to American privateers in the Dutch West India islands, occasioned a long correspondence, which terminated in the delivery of a spirited memorial by Sir Joseph Yorke, the British ambassador at the Hague, who complained of the attentions paid by the governor of St. Eustatia to vessels under the American flag^d, and his refusal to redress the complaints of the council of St. Christopher's. He required a formal disavowal of the salute by fort Orange, in St. Eustatia, to a rebel ship; and the recal of the governor, Van Graaf. The States-general were charged with duplicity, and violation of treaties; and assured that unless the required satisfaction was given, the King would not be amused with mere assurances; or delay the adoption of measures due to the interests and dignity of his crown. The States-general returned an humble and complying answer, denying an intention to recognize the independence of America, and consenting to recal

^d The word *corsaire* in the original has been uniformly translated *pirate*, when its fair meaning is only privateer.

Van Graaf: but they complained of the harsh terms in the memorial; and, as a mark of indignation, ordered Count Welderen, their envoy extraordinary in London, not to correspond on the occasion with Sir Joseph Yorke, or Lord Suffolk, the secretary of state, but to deliver his memorial to the King in person.

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XL.
1777.

From this period, a sullen civility was maintained; but in proportion as the conduct of France was more hostile, that of Holland became less ambiguous, and the trade openly maintained, in contraband articles, to the French coast, occasioned the seizure of several Dutch ships. In consequence of three angry memorials presented to the States-general by Dutch merchants, Count Welderen made complaints to the British court, not only of interruptions of commerce in the European, but in the American seas. The answer of the secretary of state set forth, in mild language, the unprovoked aggression of France; from the suddenness of the event, and the necessity of restraining the exertions of that crafty power, too great rigour might have been undesignedly exercised, in arresting neutral vessels; but if any cargoes not contraband, had been seized by His Majesty's cruisers, ample indemnification should be made.

12th Sept.
1778.

19th. Oct.

Second me-
morial of Sir
Joseph
Yorke.

23d Nov.

Sir Joseph Yoke had resided in Holland twenty-seven years, was thoroughly acquainted with the state and temper of parties, and knew the preponderance of French interest, and the fatal supineness of the Stadholder. He vindicated, in an able memorial, the conduct of Great Britain; and while he displayed the moderation of the King in not plunging Holland into a war, by demanding the succours stipulated in the treaties of 1678, and 1716, proposed to discuss the grievances in a conference, prefacing the offer with an assurance that the prevention of contraband trade should in the mean time be subject to no interpretation unwarranted by the rules of equity, and the practice of perfect generosity.

C H A P.

XL.

1778.

5th Dec.
Exertions of
the French
party.

14th Jan.

1779.

9th April.

Succours
demanded
by England.

22d July.

This proposal occasioned violent exertions among the French party; the Duke De Vauguyon, ambassador from the court of Versailles, endeavoured to pique the pride and interest of the Dutch, by demanding a clear and explicit determination to accept or renounce the advantages of commerce proffered by a decree of the French council of state, allowing the traffic in naval stores during the war. The proposition was not, however, accepted; and the French court repealed the permission given to Holland of trading with them duty-free, admitting to the exclusive enjoyment of this privilege, Amsterdam alone, "in consideration of the patriotic exertions made by that city, to persuade the republic to procure from the court of London, the security of that unlimited commerce which belonged to the Dutch flag."^c Sir Joseph Yorke did not fail to repel the calumnies advanced in these papers; he exposed the dictatorial tone assumed by France, in prescribing a mode of conduct to be maintained by the States-general toward England, and animadverted with proper severity, on the attempt to make distinctions between the different members of the same republic, so repugnant to the union and independence of the States-general.

The arts and influence of France were, however, more effectual than the remonstrances of England; and when Spain was added to the hostile combination, the striking partiality of Holland toward the enemies of Great Britain, rendered more decisive explanations indispensable. Sir Joseph Yorke therefore, in pursuance of instructions from England, demanded from the States-general the succours stipulated in the several treaties, of which the *casus foederis* was fully explained in the separate article of 1716. This memorial descended on the unjust proceedings of France and Spain, and their threats of invasion, and declared, that the

^c This favour was afterward extended to Haarlem, and subsequently to the whole province of Holland.

moment was arrived to decide whether Great Britain, who had spilt so much blood, and expended so much treasure to succour others, and maintain liberty and religion, was to be abandoned by her most ancient friends and allies, and left unprotected, except by her own courage and internal strength, to contend against the ambitious house of Bourbon, who endeavoured to crush all for the purpose of reigning over all. The States were reminded of a truth which they appeared too fatally to have forgotten, that their history contained little more than a detail of dangers successively created by the ambition of France ; and that their best days began with their union with England.

C H A P.
XL.
1779.

While the government of Holland evaded giving a definitive answer to this demand, the advocates of the British and French connections maintained a strenuous paper war. The people in spite of the allurements with which France endeavoured to bias their judgment, did not relinquish their partiality for the English alliance, and the Stadholder was firmly attached to the same cause : but an active and resolute party, who possessed the greatest share of influence and power, were zealous adherents of France, and displayed a proportionate rancour against Great Britain. The increasing strength of the hostile confederacy, and the insults offered to the British coast during the summer of 1779, gave additional spirits to the French faction, and encouraged them to represent Sir Joseph Yorke's demand as an indication of national weakness and despondency.

At this juncture, a fresh cause of dispute arose, in consequence of the reception afforded to Paul Jones and his prizes in the harbours of the republic. Sir Joseph Yorke demanded the detention of the ships and crews ; as Paul Jones, though a pretended American, was a native of Scotland, a pirate, rebel, and state criminal. The States-general refused compliance, alleging their constant maxim not to decide on the legality of captures by the vessels of any other

October.
Dispute
respecting
Paul Jones.

25th Oct.

C H A P

XL.

1779.

20th.

Conduct of
Holland.26th Nov.
Succours
refused.1st Jan.
1780.
Engagement
between
commodore
Fielding and
Count By-
land.

country ; they only opened their ports to afford shelter from storms or disasters, but would compel them to put to sea again, without unloading or disposing of their cargoes. In vain Sir Joseph Yorke in a new memorial, appealed to the rules of equity, and the express stipulations of treaties ; the Dutch government remained inflexible, and returned only a short answer, reiterating their former opinions.

Great Britain, on the faith, and fair construction of treaties, had a right, in case of war with the house of Bourbon, to call on the Dutch as allies for active aid ; every demand of that kind was obstinately resisted ; neutrality was the utmost extent of their profession, and even that was attended with indications of partiality almost amounting to hostility. Yet the government of Holland claimed and were allowed, all the advantages arising from treaties of alliance, and expected protection in a commerce calculated to raise the naval power of the enemy, and depress the interest of this country. To terminate this disgraceful state of suspense between alliance and hostility, the British ambassador again pressed for the succours stipulated by treaties. The Dutch not only refused the demand ; but renewing their complaints on the interruption of trade, announced their intention of appointing a convoy with their next fleet to the coast of France. The English ministry, having ineffectually remonstrated against this unfriendly resolution, encountered its effects with becoming vigour and spirit. A fleet bound for the Mediterranean, under the convoy of Count Byland, was met by a British squadron under Commodore Fielding : the Dutch fired on the boats which were approaching to search their vessels ; and their Admiral answered a shot a-head from the British Commodore by a broadside. This act of hostility being returned, Byland struck his colours ; the greater part of the convoy escaped, but the few which were captured, afforded sufficient proof of the contraband commerce

to which the Dutch thus gave countenance and protection. Count Byland accepted permission to hoist his colours ; but refusing to return to his own coast, accompanied the British commander to Spithead.

C H A P.
XL.
1780.

The event furnished grounds for numerous complaints ; but the British cabinet justified their proceeding, and Lord Stormont strenuously remonstrated with Count Welderen on the tameness with which his government permitted all the regards due to ancient amity with England to be sacrificed to the the cupidity of individuals, or the pitiful artifices of cabal and intrigue. As the most friendly method of disclosing the sentiments of the British court, the secretary of state announced, by a *declaration verbale*, that if the Dutch persisted not only in refusing the aids stipulated by treaties, but in assisting the enemy with naval stores, they could no longer be allowed the benefits of an alliance which they deserted by changing it into a neutrality, and that too in the midst of a war maintained by the house of Bourbon for the destruction of Great Britain, which could never be effected without producing the ruin of the Republic.

28th Jan.

21st Mar.

After allowing nearly two months for the discussion of this official declaration, Sir Joseph Yorke again addressed a memorial to the States-general, recapitulating all the facts he had formerly urged, complaining of the hostile conduct of Count Byland toward the boats of His Majesty's fleet, and of their injustice in prohibiting the export of provisions for the use of the garrison of Gibraltar, while they were so eager and vindictive in conveying ammunition and stores to Spain, which had disturbed their trade in a wanton and unprecedented manner. If the Dutch, by their own act, ceased to be allies, they could have no connexion with England but such as subsisted between neutral powers in a state of amity ; all treaties were reciprocal, and therefore unless the Dutch, within three weeks, gave a satisfactory answer

Remon-
strance on
the subject.

CHAP. to the demand of succours made eight months before,
 XL. their conduct would be considered as a breach of alliance, the effect of treaties suspended, and the same system observed toward them, as toward other neutral and unprivileged states. To this declaration, an evasive provisional answer was given, importing, that it was impossible to consult the several states of the republic, so as to procure an answer in three weeks. But procrastination was now no longer allowed : the court of Great Britain, at the expiration of the appointed term, declared the provisional suspension of all particular stipulations respecting the freedom of navigation and commerce in time of war, particularly those contained in the marine treaty of 1674.^f

^{Formation of the armed neutrality.} The unfriendly conduct of Holland toward England was stimulated by the preponderance of a Gallic faction in government, and a misjudging avarice, grasping at a portion of American commerce ; and was encouraged by a most extraordinary confederacy formed at this period in the north of Europe, and since known by the name of the armed neutrality. This compact originated in the intrigues of France, and the desire of that government to embroil Great Britain with new enemies, and distract her proceedings by uncertainty of rights, and the discussion of captious and unusual claims. Influenced by French counsels, the Spaniards, under pretence of blockading Gibraltar, had refused to admit into the Mediterranean some Russian vessels; the Empress indignantly mediated measures of security against the repetition of such an outrage, when the King of Prussia, apprised of her sentiments, through the medium of Count Panin, her minister for foreign affairs, used every effort to direct them against the interests of England. The views of Frederick were seconded by Panin, who equally hated

^f For these facts I have consulted the state papers, which are published according to their date, in the Annual Register and Remembrancer; many pamphlets published in Holland, on both sides of the question, and some official correspondence.

Great Britain: and Frederick had long been assiduously and successfully cultivating an interest at the court of Petersburgh. Catherine II. always professed, and most probably felt, a sincere friendship for the British monarch, and Sir James Harris, the English ambassador at her court, maintained the interests of his country with the utmost diligence, zeal, and intelligence. No cause of complaint existed between the two crowns; the empress appeared not insensible to the advantages she had derived from the British alliance, and had, from the beginning of the American contest, promised assistance at different epochs, though she always evaded the accomplishment of her engagements. Her resentment against Spain furnished Prussia with a pretext for inculating new maxims of maritime regulation, unknown to the law of nations, and though general in their verbal construction, obviously prejudicial to Great Britain alone. The empress, from a love of ostentation and paradox, gave attention to the new system, and soon directed all her efforts to its establishment. While armaments in several of her ports, and a mysterious alacrity among her ministers, indicated the formation of some extensive project; she announced the completion of her system, by a declaration to the courts of London, Versailles, and Madrid, in which she concluded a series of professions and complaints, by stating four propositions founded on the primitive rights of nations, which every people might reclaim, and which the belligerent powers could not invalidate, without violating the laws of neutrality. It was affirmed, in three of the articles, that goods in free bottoms must be free, and exempt from search; and another limited the characteristics of a blockaded port, by so strict a definition, that a blockade was rendered almost impossible. These principles were announced as a rule for proceedings and judgments on the legality of prizes; and the empress proclaimed her determination to support them with her whole maritime force.

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1780.

26th Feb.

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1780.

April.

18th.

25th.

23d.

8th July.

Accession of
different
powers.

August.

All the enemies of England received this declaration with enthusiastic applause. The neutral powers extolled its wisdom, justice, and magnanimity. Sweden alone, under the influence of France, requested from the court of Petersburgh some explanations of its tendency, which were calculated to render the terms additionally hostile. Spain was the first of the belligerent powers which notified accession to the principles of this unprecedented state paper. France warmly commended the new system, declaring its principles to be substantially those which Louis XVI. had made war for the purpose of maintaining. Great Britain alone returned a civil but somewhat sullen answer, vindicating her own conduct during the war, and declaring the readiness of her courts of admiralty to render perfect justice in every case of complaint.

Such a war as that wherein Great Britain was engaged must be carried on with manifest disadvantage, if she was prevented from depriving the enemy of those succours on which the success of their naval operations so materially depended. Sir James Harris used every exertion in remonstrating with the empress against the new rules of maritime law; but though he succeeded in convincing her that she had been duped by France and Prussia into the adoption of a measure, which, under the pretence of neutrality, was hostile to England, he could not induce her to recede. She alleged her promises publicly given for its support, and was beside flattered with the expectation of permanent glory, as the author of a new clause in the code of universal jurisprudence.

Denmark and Sweden having acceded to the new system, which accorded with their scheme of commerce, the King of Prussia used every artifice to inflame the empress, and excite her to more resolute efforts. He caused incessant representations to be made against the violation of the laws of neutrality in the capture of Count Byland's fleet, and vainly endeavoured to engage Catherine to guarantee by treaty

the possessions of Holland, in every part of the globe, C H A P. as a mean of protecting the Dutch against the conse- XL.
quences to be apprehended from the growing differ-
ences with England. Although foiled in this attempt,
he commenced an insidious negociation to be included
in the armed neutrality, hoping eventually to find
some pretence for a complaint against England, and
involve all Europe in a general flame. This proposi-
tion was for some time eluded, but Frederick ultimately
found means to be included in the league. His in-
fluence at the court of Petersburg had, however, in
the mean time greatly declined. The empress was
dazzled by his exalted reputation, cajoled by his flat-
teries, and had been in some measure benefited by his
intrigues ; but his personal influence was now dan-
gerously rivalled by the Emperor of Germany, for
whom Catharine daily professed an increasing esteem.
These two great potentates, early in the year, had an
interview at Mohilow, on the frontiers of Poland ; a
discussion of their mutual interest produced mutual
confidence and esteem ; and an important secret treaty
was concluded between them. As the views of Prussia
manifestly tended to the advantage of France, and
prejudice of Austria, every circumstance favourable
to the emperor, was proportionately injurious to the
Prussian monarch. His intrigues were now disre-
garded ; and his agent Panin ineffectually endea-
voured to instil into the mind of Catherine projects
favourable to his views. The Prince Royal of Prussia^g,
soon after the meeting at Mohilow, was sent to Peters-
burg for the purpose of effacing the impression made
by the Emperor of Germany. France contributed to
the magnificence of his establishment by a loan of four
hundred thousand crowns ; but his reception was so
cold, that he returned to Berlin disappointed, dissatis-
fied, and disgusted ; public civilities and ostentatious
entertainments, made no compensation for his failure

* Afterward Frederick William II.

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Capture of
Laurens.

3d Sept.

Discovery
of a treaty
between
Holland and
America

6th Oct.

in the principal objects of his journey, the establishing many of a high political character, and revival of an advantageous ascendancy.^h

Meanwhile the state of sullen dissatisfaction which occasioned the abolition of the ancient connexion between Great Britain and Holland, resolved itself into active hostility: the mystery which had covered the views and conduct of the Dutch was dispelled by accident; and the court of Great Britain was impelled to a firm and decisive mode of conduct, as well in resentment of past treachery, as with a view to counteract the effects of the neutral league. The *Vestal* frigate, commanded by Captain Keppel, took near the banks of Newfoundland a congress packet. The papers were thrown over-board; but, by the intrepidity of an English sailor, recovered with little damage. They fully proved the perfidy of the Dutch, who before the existence of any dispute with Great Britain had entered into a formal treaty of amity and commerce with the revolted Coloniesⁱ, fully recognizing their independence, and containing many stipulations highly injurious to England, and beneficial to her enemies both in Europe and America. Disagreements on some of the arrangements had occasioned delays in its completion, but Henry Laurens, late president of the congress, who was one of the passengers in the captured vessel, was authorized to negotiate definitively, and entertained no doubt of success. On his arrival in London, Mr. Laurens was examined before the privy council, and on his refusal to answer interrogatories, committed to the Tower.

^h On this subject I have consulted the state papers, printed in the periodical works of the time, and collected in an 8vo vol. published by Hatchard, 1801. The Life of Catherine II. Eton's Survey of the Turkish Empire, chap. x. Lord Liverpool's discourse on the Conduct of the Government of Great Britain in respect to Neutral Nations, ed. 1801, with a new preface; the Letters of Sulpicius on the Northern Confederacy; and an ample official Correspondence on all the political transactions. I have also been favoured with much private information.

ⁱ It was dated 4th September 1778, soon after the commencement of hostilities between England and France; and several days before the first complaints presented by the Dutch merchants.

The first discovery of this transaction occasioned a great sensation in Holland, where the people perceived, with surprise and indignation, that they were delivered, by factious agents^k, into the hands of France, and involved in a secret treaty for espousing an uncertain cause, at the expense of inevitable hostility with an old ally. These sentiments would have been highly favourable to the stadholder, had he not negligently suffered the opportunity to pass; but the opposing faction boldly avowing their agency, and making their utmost exertions to gain partisans, reaped the advantages of decision, and secured a protection against the consequences of investigation.

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Sir Joseph Yorke presented a memorial, complaining of the hostile treaty, demanding from the States prompt satisfaction, a disavowal of conduct so irregular, so repugnant to the most sacred engagements, and to the constitution of Batavia; and the exemplary punishment of Van Berkel and his accomplices, as disturbers of the public peace, and violators of the law of nations. This memorial producing no effect, the British ambassador presented another in terms still more cogent and definitive, announcing that a denial of justice, or evasion of the demand by silence, would be followed by hostile extremities. This remonstrance also failing, a royal manifesto was issued, declaring hostilities against Holland, and explaining, in clear and satisfactory terms, the King's motives; Count Welderen was ordered to withdraw from the English court, and some papers which, just before his departure, he attempted to deliver, were refused by the secretary of state, because the accustomed relation between the two countries had ceased, and with it the official and the accredited character of the ambassador.^l

10th Nov.
Memorials
on the sub-
ject.

12th Dec.

20th.
War de-
clared,

29th.

^k The pensionary Van Berkel, and De Neufville of Amsterdam, who framed and executed the treaty, were principal supporters of the French party in Holland.

^l Taken from the papers published by authority and official correspondence.

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1780.
25th Jan.
Message
to parlia-
ment.

The rupture with Holland was announced to parliament by a royal message, immediately after the recess. The public indignation was sufficiently excited, by the malignity and ingratitude of Holland, to render the war popular, and the vigour and promptitude of the preparations afforded general satisfaction. The message was, nevertheless, debated with great warmth in both Houses, and amendments moved to the addresses. The members of opposition insisted that the insolence of the memorial presented by Sir Joseph Yorke in 1777, had been more efficacious in alienating the Dutch from Great Britain, than all the gold and intrigues of France. They maintained, that the paper found in the possession of Mr. Laurens, was only a project or draft of an incomplete treaty, referring for its future accomplishment to events yet undecided. Ministers were blamed with asperity for the length of the recess, during which they had added another to the formidable list of opponents, while their supineness, ignorance, and want of judgment, left the country without an ally.

The ministry answered, that the memorial delivered in 1777, was comprised in terms sufficiently temperate for the occasion; and His Majesty would have been culpably negligent of the national honour had he omitted a forcible remonstrance. The offensive treaty was not a draft, but formally executed by the pensionary Van Berkel, and John de Neufville, citizen of Amsterdam, on the part of Holland, and by Lee, on the behalf of America. The Dutch had refused to disavow the transaction, and therefore sanctioned the construction that they fully approved it. The recess of parliament was not contrived for the purpose of secret proceeding; nor could the Houses, if sitting, have received a communication on the subject till the negotiation was terminated. Mr. Wraxall made a long and able speech on the subject of alliances, unfolding with precision the views and resources of the principal European states, and recom-

mending to government a close and immediate connexion with the Emperor of Germany. If that potentate declared war in our favour, the necessity of providing an adequate opposing force, would frustrate all hopes of increasing the French marine ; and the shock would be felt no less at Madrid and the Hague, than at Paris. The Emperor might be allured to our cause by a liberal subsidy for enabling him to take the field, by yielding to him some important possessions in India, and by protecting him in opening the navigation of the Scheldt. This measure would be beneficial to him, and injurious to Holland ; a nation which owed its origin, progress, and protection, to the fostering hand of England, and yet joined the standard of the House of Bourbon against its only natural ally.

The amendments moved in both Houses were rejected^m ; the lords entered on their journals two protests, one signed by nine, the other by eight peers.

Although the tremendous disorders of the preceding year occasioned great terror at direct appeals to large bodies of the people, the political associations formed in all parts of the kingdom did not dissolve, but endeavoured, by incendiary resolutions, to reanimate the flame of opposition. In many of their meetings strong complaints were urged against the authorities supposed to be now first granted to the military, and individuals were recommended to arm against the attack of surrounding enemies, and all invasions of their rights and liberties. The meetings of these associations in the counties and towns were highly alarming, but the danger was increased by the novel and unconstitutional measure of appointing delegates, or representatives to transact their affairs in the capital, and by mutual aid and advice give support and efficacy to their petitions. Mr. Burke

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Popular
delegates
appointed.

^m In the House of Commons two amendments were moved ; the first was rejected by 180 to 101, the other without a division. The numbers in the Upper House were, against the amendment 84 ; for it 19.

CHAP. received from many of these bodies high compliments for his efforts in the cause of reform, and in compliance with their requests, again brought forward the rejected bills of last year.

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15th Feb.
Burke's eco-
nomical re-
form again
introduced.

He introduced his motion by reading the famous resolutions respecting the increased influence of the crown, the power of the House to correct abuses in the expenditure of the civil list, and the duty of the Commons to afford the redress required by the petitions of the people. He considered these resolutions a valuable legacy bequeathed by the late parliament, and an atonement for previous criminal servility. They were the result of long, deliberate, and sober debate, when the House was well attended, and a spirit of economy pervaded every corner. He trusted the new parliament would consider it their duty to carry into effect the wishes of the people, wishes which had been delivered in thunder and lightning. Although the people had not agreed in any system of complaint, or plan of reform, yet they had all stated either errors or calamities in the administration of government and expense, which ought to be rectified. Though all their propositions were not practicable, they agreed in two points, the dangerous influence of the crown, and the necessity for retrenchment and economy. He then gave a narrative of the introduction and fate of his former bills, complaining of the versatility of parliament: At first crowded Houses were seen on every stage of the business, and they showed an apparent conviction of having no objection to the abstract and general propositions; but when he proceeded to a specific reform, they deserted him and his cause. They first dwindled off from one question, then silently stole away from another, till at last the whole was permitted to moulder and shrink imperceptibly from the view; and he was obliged, after much fatigue and no success, to abandon the task, with the mortifying reflection that his labours and those of the House had produced no benefit to the

country. He defended himself against all imputations on the revival of an unsuccessful proposition, and vindicated his plan, as no less useful to the King than salutary to the people. To maintain the parade and show of royalty, without its power, was like the absurd vanity of robbing the manger to decorate a starved emaciated horse with bells and trappings, while the poor animal, deprived of food, groaned beneath the wretchedness of ornament. The advice and language he used could not be unseasonable or impertinent if addressed to an Alexander, or a Charles, since retrenchment might increase their powers for war, and enable them to diffuse horror with more rapidity. But to a King like ours, who hated war, and loved peace ; who participated in the interests, joys, and disasters of the people, it must be at once proper and welcome. A faction had crept in, and prevented that happy sympathy which should prevail between the head and all the inferior members of the body : this faction it was the business of parliament to crush, to tear the veil interposed between the Sovereign and his people, and dispel those clouds which concealed the royal countenance from his dutiful and affectionate subjects. Again adverting to the example of France, Mr. Burke pronounced high encomiums on the principles and system of Mr. Necker. That excellent statesman, he said, had alone stood his ground amidst the cabals and intrigues of a court, though an unprotected stranger. Calumny might attempt to blacken him in the eyes of his Sovereign ; but it was impossible to blind the discernment of that monarch so far as to obliterate from his memory this honourable truth ;—“he has given me a navy and has not laid a tax on my subjects.” When the resources of France were thought to be exhausted, and every common channel was known to be dried up, Necker dug into the mine of national treasure, went to the spring and fountain-head of revenue, and by demolishing the dams and dykes that stopped the current of wealth,

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brought into the exchequer the value of six hundred useless places. France might be obliged at last to have recourse to burthensome taxes; but she had three years fought Great Britain without them; and an exertion of three years might give her a decisive superiority through the whole contest; it might put her system in such a train as to give the tone and determine the complexion of a whole century. It would impart more solid and permanent glory to the reign of Louis XVI. than was derived from all the illustrious deeds of Henry IV. Mr. Burke invoked the candour of the House; not to treat the proposed measure with insidious respect in its outset, and tempt it to a death of slow and lingering torture. He called on Lord North as arbiter of its destiny; entreating, that if he meant to deal the blow of death, he would save himself and the House much fatigue, and the nation much anxiety and disappointment, by determining the matter on that day; he would then be, for one day at least, a decisive minister.

26th Feb.

Leave was given, without opposition, to bring in a bill for regulating His Majesty's civil establishments, limiting pensions, and suppressing useless places. The second reading occasioned a long debate, in which the principles of the measure, and its probable effects, were amply and ably investigated. The principal opponents were Mr. De Grey, Earl Nugent, Mr. Rosewarne, Mr. Percival, Mr. Wraxall, and Mr. Dundas. They all concurred in warm eulogies on the character and talents of Mr. Burke, and expressed diffidence in resisting a measure so plausible, and so captivating to the public, as retrenchment of expenditure. Economy was never more necessary; but its advantages were not to be purchased by the violation of sacred rights. In the first year of the King's reign the civil list was established at eight hundred thousand pounds; and the additional sum of one hundred thousand pounds per annum, was afterward given; both being settled on him for life. This was a bargain, and one highly

advantageous to the public, made in lieu of the crown C H A P.
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lands ; the revenue was therefore to be considered as positive freehold, as a personal estate, held under the faith and solemnity of an equitable contract. The power of parliament to resume its own grants was undeniable ; but it was impossible to divide the ideas of their omnipotence from those of their justice and discretion. Economy was undoubtedly desirable ; but thirty or forty thousand pounds a year would be too dearly purchased by the abolition of places created by the wisdom of our ancestors, to support the dignity and lustre of the British crown. The increase of influence was an unfounded assertion ; nor was the present bound by the vote of the last parliament on that subject. The established powers and influence of the crown had not been abused, or perverted to the prejudice of liberty and the constitution. None of the places proposed to be retrenched were created by His Majesty, and the acts of his reign had been highly favourable to the liberties of the country, and diminution of undue influence; witness those for rendering permanent the salaries of the judges, and for trying controverted elections, which effectually abrogated the power, if the inclination might exist, of biassing courts of justice, and perverting the sense of the people in returns to the House of Commons. The reasonings founded on retrenchments made in France were inapplicable to Great Britain ; the civil list, as well as the governments, were essentially different : France was a despotic, England a free country. In England the throne was built on liberty ; in France it rested on the necks of two hundred thousand soldiers, and was upheld by farmers-general, by oppression, by servile parliaments banished at pleasure, by military rigour, and armed authority. If the conduct of France was to be cited, the whole should be considered, and unprovoked aggression brought into view as clearly as economical reform : bad faith was always bad policy ; and the greater evil of unjust war would swallow up

C H A P. the lesser good of economical retrenchment. The
 XL. dignity of the British crown was connected with the
 1781. dignity and opulence of the nation, nor could the
 enormous expences into which Great Britain had been
 forced by the enemy be repaired by such an unim-
 portant saving as the bill proposed, acquired at the
 expence of individuals who, relying on the good
 faith of parliament, considered their property as se-
 cure and permanent as freehold estates.

First speech
of Mr.
William
Pitt.

This debate was distinguished by the first parlia-
 mentary exertion of the honourable William Pitt,
 younger son of the illustrious Earl of Chatham. On
 his rising in the House, mute attention prevailed; the
 genius of the parent was recollected, and the most
 eager curiosity was excited to ascertain how great a
 portion of it was transmitted to the son. Such great
 hopes and anxious expectations were never more
 amply gratified; the juvenile orator delivered himself
 with grace, facility, and animation; his manner,
 which afterward became so elegant, was deliberate,
 and equally remote from timid bashfulness, and over-
 weening presumption. His voice was rich and
 striking; his periods harmonious and energetic,
 without appearance of art or study; and his rea-
 soning displayed all the fire of his father, combined
 with that which his father often wanted, methodical
 arrangement, and lucid order.

He gave hearty assent to the principle of the bill,
 and thought a proposition for retrenchment of the
 civil list revenue would have come with more grace,
 more benefit to the public service, if it had sprung
 from the royal breast. Ministers should have given
 to the people the consolation of knowing that their
 sovereign participated in the sufferings of the empire;
 they ought to have consulted the glory of their royal
 master, and seated him in the hearts of his people,
 by abating from magnificence what was due to ne-
 cessity. Instead of waiting for the slow request of
 a burthened people, they should have courted popu-

larity by a voluntary surrender of useless revenue. But if ministers failed in their duty; if they interfered between the benignity of the sovereign, and the distresses of the public, and stopped the tide of royal sympathy, was that a reason why the House of Commons, His Majesty's public counsellors, should desist from a measure so congenial to the paternal feelings of the sovereign, so applicable to the wants and miseries of the people? The House, acting as faithful representatives, ought to seize on every object of equitable resource; and surely none were so fair, so probable, or so flattering as retrenchment and economy. The obligations of their character demanded an unhesitating pursuit of those objects, even to the foot of the throne. Actuated by duty, they should advise the King to part with useless ostentation, that he might preserve necessary power; to abate a little of pomp, that he might ascertain respect; to diminish somewhat of exterior grandeur, that he might increase and secure authentic dignity. It was their immediate duty, as the Commons House of Parliament, to guard the lives, liberties, and property of the people: the last obligation was the strongest, because property was most liable to invasion by the secret and subtle attacks of influence. It could not derogate from the real glory of the crown to accept the advice; it could be no diminution of true grandeur to yield to the respectful petitions of the people. Tutelage might be a hard term; but the guardianship of that House could not be disgraceful to a constitutional King. The abridgment of unnecessary expence could be no abatement of royalty. Magnificence and grandeur were not inconsistent with retrenchment and economy; but on the contrary, in times of necessity, and uncommon exertion, solid grandeur was dependent on the reduction of expence. It was observed early in the debate, that the bill combined two objects which ought to have been separate; reform and economy; in his opinion, they ought to go hand-in-hand; but

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the bill had a third object, more important than either, a reduction of the influence of the crown; an influence more dreadful, because more secret in its attacks, and more concealed in its operations than the power of prerogative. The proposed saving, it was objected, was immaterial, a matter of trifling consideration when measured by the necessities or expences of the times. This was, surely, a most singular and unaccountable species of reasoning. The calamities of the crisis were too great to be benefited by economy; the public expences so enormous that it was ridiculous to attend to small matters of account. So many millions had been expended that thousands were beneath consideration. Such was the language of the day, such the reasoning by which the principle of the bill was disputed. Much argument had been used to show the impropriety of resuming a parliamentary grant, and the right of the House had even been denied. The weakness of such a doctrine was its refutation. But it ought to be remembered, that the civil list revenue was granted for other purposes than those of personal gratification. It was granted to support the dignity and interests of the empire, to maintain its grandeur, to pay the judges and foreign ministers, to maintain justice, and support respect, to pay the great officers necessary to the lustre of the crown; and it was proportioned to the dignity and opulence of the people. But the sum of revenue which was necessary to sustain the common dignity of the crown and people at the time of the grant, ought now to be abated, as necessities had increased. The people who afforded that revenue under the circumstances of the occasion, were justified in resuming a part under the pressing demand of an altered situation. They felt their right but exercised it with pain and regret. They approached the throne with bleeding hearts, afflicted at the necessity of applying for retrenchment of the royal gratification; but the request was at once loyal and submissive. When he considered the obligations of the

House, he could not cherish an idea that they would dispute the principle of the bill, which was essential to the being and independence of the country. He could not believe that economy would be condemned, or the means of accomplishing it abandoned.

Several distinguished members of opposition exerted themselves in behalf of the measure ; Lord Maitland made his first parliamentary essay on the same side, and spoke with great ability ; and Mr. Burke, in his reply, surpassed the expectations even of his warmest admirers. The motion for a second reading was, however, lostⁿ, and the bill rejected, by adjourning the further consideration for six months.

The other popular efforts of the last session were also revived ; the bills for excluding contractors and revenue officers from the House of Commons, met their fate on the same day ; both occasioned some debate, but were rejected^o. Sir Philip Jennings Clerke also renewed the proposition which Mr. Gilbert had abandoned, for imposing a tax on places and pensions, but his effort was unsuccessful^p. The loan for the current service of the year was exposed to censures unusually severe. The sudden rise in value of the subscription contracts, usually called scrip, to near eleven per cent. above their original purchase, formed the foundation for numerous imputations and motions against the minister ; though his conduct was ably defended, and sanctioned by the House^q. The third reading of the bill in the Lords, produced an able speech from the Marquis of Rockingham ; to which no reply was made ; and eight lords joined in a protest.

These were not the only efforts to gain popularity by the discussion of questions calculated to interest the public. The interference of the military in sup-

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The bill
rejected.

Other popu-
lar efforts.

21st Mar.
21st May.

7th, 8th,
12th, and
26th Mar.
21st Mar.

Sheridan's
motion re-
specting
the military.

ⁿ 233 to 190.

^o The contractor's bill by 120 to 100 ; the other 133 to 86.

^p The bill was rejected on the second reading, 93 to 33.

^q The majority against a motion on the subject, made by Mr. Fox, was 169 to 111, and on a motion for inquiry, by Sir George Savile, 209 to 163.

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pressing the late alarming riots was introduced to the House by an able speech from Mr. Sheridan. This gentleman, a native of Ireland, was advantageously known to the public by the exercise of extraordinary talents in dramatic and lyric poetry. His exquisite wit and refined erudition afforded great hopes of eminence in the senate ; hopes which were surpassed by the various excellencies of his nervous, rich, and beautiful oratory. He took his seat for the town of Stafford, and had on more than one occasion, obtained the favourable attention of the House.^r His motions were three ; the first declaring that the military force could not justifiably be applied in dispersing tumultuous assemblies of the people, without waiting for directions from civil magistrates, unless outrages had broken forth with such violence as to overbear civil authority, and threaten the subversion of legal government. The other two affirmed that the unprecedented order to the military, on the seventh of June, afforded strong presumption of the defective state of the police in Westminster ; and required the appointment of a committee to inquire into the conduct of the magistracy and civil power during the riots, and report to the House the state and government of the city of Westminster.

In support of these motions, he made a severe philippic against government, delivered in glowing language, and abounding in pointed invectives. He descended on the miserable state of the police in Westminster, ascribing to it all the disorders which had raged without control in June, and occasioned the establishment of military power in the metropolis, and its extension to every part of the kingdom. But if the guilt of magistrates or deficiency of police had occasioned the adoption of such an alarming expedient, why had government permitted the same justices to continue in the commission ? Men of tried

^r He made his first speech the 20th of November 1780.

inability and convicted depravity! Was this neglect a plan to render the country still dependent on the bayonet, and must the military power still be employed in aid of contrived weakness and deliberate inattention? Some might wish to see the subject familiarized to the use of soldiers, and that they might be resorted to on occasions less alarming.

Only two reasonable excuses could be assigned for the conduct of government in the orders issued for the employment of the military. The first, that the riots were not produced by the persons who had assembled around the House, instigated by religious enthusiasm, or apprehensive zeal; nor yet by a set of vagrants, who had taken advantage of the occasion; but that they were the effects of a deliberate and deep-laid scheme; a conspiracy contrived by the enemies of the country, to lay the metropolis in ashes, and strike at the very foundations of the national wealth and credit. Such was the opinion maintained by the lord chief justice of the king's bench in parliament, and by another judge on the bench; but no proceeding in either House had shown that such a notion was entertained; and if all the trials were perused, from the first unhappy man brought to the bar of the Old Bailey, up to Lord George Gordon, it would be found that he alone was charged with high treason. He was both leader and army in this great machination against the state; not one of his subalterns having risen above the humble charge of felony. The progress of the riots, as well as the evidence on the trials, would prove the futility of imputing them to a regular scheme, or deep-laid plot against the country.

The other reason which might justify government for the orders they had issued, was their belief that the substitution of the military for the civil power, was, in all cases of tumult and riot, safe, easy, and constitutional. If this doctrine was to be established, farewell to freedom! If this was law, the country would be reduced to a military government of the

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very worst species, including all the mischiefs of despotism, without the discipline or the security. But it was said the best protection against this evil was found in the virtue, moderation, and constitutional principles of the sovereign. Though he contemplated those virtues with as much reverence as any man, he trusted such a species of liberty would never disgrace the British soil. Liberty, resting on the virtuous inclinations of any one man, was but suspended despotism ; the sword was not, indeed, on the necks of the people, but it hung by the small and brittle thread of human will.

After a long debate, in which the conduct of government in the suppression of the riots, and the indictment of Lord George Gordon, were ably defended, the first of Mr. Sheridan's motions was withdrawn, the second negatived by a considerable majority^s, and the third without a division.

Petition of
the de-
legates.
1780.
1st Nov.

1781.
13th Mar.

The associations and their delegates had, during the whole session, engaged much attention of parliament. In the debate on the King's speech, Lord Abingdon expressed his expectations, that through them a new order of affairs would be introduced, which would render useless such minutiae as addresses. He wished the people might obtain a new Magna Charta, a new declaration of rights ; for the present government was arbitrary ; a system of despotism ruling by will, and not by law. Mr. Adam had justly stigmatised these committees for spreading baleful effects over the whole country, and affording encouragement to its enemies. The American congress made them a principal engine in encouraging the people of the colonies to persist in rebellion, and in their publications descanted on the distractions occasioned in Great Britain by the committees of association, as inducements to perseverance. These committees, he said, did not confine themselves to public

transactions, the encouragement of the enemy, the C H A P. disturbance of peace, or the prevention of domestic XL. unanimity ; but basely and unjustifiably attempted to 1781. ruin the characters of individuals who opposed their views. He verified the assertion by reading an advertisement of the Westminster committee, reflecting on himself so grossly and unwarrantably, that even those members of parliament who were most attached to the associations, disavowed any share in the transaction.

The principle and legality of these associations, 2d April. and particularly the dangerous system of sending delegates, came more fully into discussion, when a petition signed by thirty-two of these mock representatives of unconstitutional constituents, was offered to the House by Mr. Duncombe, and afterward, on the motion of Sir George Savile for referring it to a committee. The petition was founded on that from Yorkshire, presented to the last parliament, and supported by nearly the same arguments, with the addition of those which resulted from the famous resolutions on the increasing influence of the crown.

Beside the objections to the contents of the petition, it was reprobated as being signed by men who had notoriously assumed the unconstitutional character of delegates and committee men, who assembled in that capacity, formed resolutions, and published them in newspapers ; all which proceedings were founded in a design to awe and controul parliament. The House was cautioned by Lord Fielding, to beware of conjuring up a spirit which the tremendous events of last year alone had laid. How far that spirit would have extended was difficult to say ; but the discontinuance of its operation was sudden and remarkable. The associated bodies had adjourned or dissolved ; conversation had undergone a material change ; appeals to the people on the subject of recurring to first principles were no longer

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made, and even newspapers ceased to be declamatory and violent. Mr. Courtenay attacked these confederacies with poignant raillery; comparing the associations to self-erected political hand-posts placed in all parts of the country, to shew the people what path they should pursue. He animadverted with severity on the characters of the delegates.

*Their wise Divan, the best companions grace,
Chiefs out of war, and members out of place,
Who fondly mingle in their hope-fil'd bowl
The feast of reason and the flow of soul.*

The defence of the committees and their delegates was principally founded on the want of a positive prohibitory law. Sir George Savile's motion was rejected.

Motions respecting Sir Hugh Palliser.

The re-election of Sir Hugh Palliser to a seat in parliament furnished a topic for several motions, in which Mr. Fox displayed great bitterness of invective; Sir Hugh answered with temper and dignity, and the transactions of the courts-martial on him and Admiral Keppel were often discussed; but the subject had long ceased to interest the public.

12th June.
Motion for
a committee
on the Amer-
ican war.

Late in the session, Mr. Fox moved for a committee to consider of the American war; and intimated his intention of proposing a resolution, "that ministers ought immediately to take every measure for concluding peace with the colonies." In support of this proposition, he descanted on the circumstances of the war, including even the latest intelligence, and inferring the absolute impossibility of conquest.

The motion operated as a kind of test on the new members; most of the speeches contained some general principles, or professions of political faith, and many of them historical reviews of the origin and conduct of the war. In answer to some observations, reflecting on the political conduct of the late Earl of Chatham, Mr. Pitt made a speech of extraordinary

ability, vindicating the whole parliamentary conduct of his father respecting America, as perfectly consistent. The Earl had always heartily reprobated the principle, progress, and ultimate objects of the war, and never gave a vote or opinion in contradiction to those sentiments. The only observation of Lord Chatham, on which a contrary inference could be founded, was an assertion that Great Britain had a right to impose duties for regulation of commerce, duties incidental to the extension of trade, calculated for the mutual benefit of both countries; but not a tax for raising a revenue in America, to be remitted to England, and disposed of by parliament.

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After explaining his father's sentiments, Mr. Pitt stated his own. The American war had been defended, he said, with uncommon fervour: one member, in the heat of his zeal, had termed it a holy war, and several others had been reprehended for calling it a wicked, or accursed war. For his part, he was persuaded, and would affirm it to be a most accursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war; conceived in injustice, nurtured and brought forth in folly; its footsteps marked with blood, slaughter, persecution, and devastation. It contained every characteristic of moral depravity and human turpitude, was pregnant with every species of mischief, and threatened with destruction the miserable people, who were the object of those black resentments by which it was engendered. The mischiefs, however, recoiled on the unhappy people of England, who were made the instruments to effect these wicked purposes. The nation was drained of its best blood and its vital resources in men and money. The expense was enormous, the return nothing but a series of ineffective victories, or disgraceful defeats; victories, only celebrated with momentary triumph over our brethren, or defeats which filled the land with mourning for

CHAP. the loss of dear and valuable relations slain in the
 XL. impious contest for enforcing unconditional sub-
 mission ; or narratives of the glorious exertions of
 men struggling in the holy cause of liberty, though
 struggling under all the difficulties and disadvan-
 tages generally deemed the necessary concomitants
 of victory and success. What Englishman, on read-
 ing the narratives of these bloody and well-fought
 contests, could refrain from lamenting the loss of
 British blood in such a cause ? or from weeping on
 whichever side victory might incline ? To this
 melancholy consideration might be added, that we
 perceived only our natural and powerful enemies, or
 lukewarm and faithless friends, rejoicing in our
 calamities and meditating our ultimate downfal.
 The motion was negatived.^u

16th July.
 Close of the
 session.

The King terminated the session at an unusually
 advanced period ; thanking parliament for the faith-
 ful discharge of their duties, and expressing his
 earnest desire of peace, though he would not ac-
 cept that blessing on terms inconsistent with the
 honour and dignity of the crown, and the perma-
 nent interest and security of the people.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST.

1780—1781.

Attack of the French on Jersey. — Progress of the siege of Gibraltar. — Misery, and relief of the garrison. — Brave sortie. — The enemy land in Minorca. — Naval actions in the channel — and off the Dogger Bank. — Transactions in the West Indies. — Capture of Saint Eustatia — Demerary — Issequibo, and Berbice. — The French fleet reinforced. — Capture of Tobago. — Transactions in America. — Lord Cornwallis reinforced. — Arnold's expedition to Virginia. — Mutiny in the American army. — Tarleton defeated at the Cowpens. — Lord Cornwallis's incursion into North Carolina. — Royal standard erected at Hillsborough. — Massacre of the loyalists. — Battle of Guilford. — Lord Cornwallis invades Virginia. — Lord Rawdon defeats the enemy at Hobkirk's Hill. — Camden evacuated. — Success of the enemy in South Carolina and Georgia. — Suspension of operations. — Execution of Colonel Haynes. — Battle at Eutaws. — Expedition of the enemy against Portsmouth. — General Phillips ravages Virginia. — Arrival of Lord Cornwallis. — His pursuit of La Fayette. — Success of Tarleton and Simcoe. — Projects of the enemy against New York. — Clinton requires troops from Virginia. — Countermands the order. — Lord Cornwallis stations himself at York and Gloucester. — Arrival of the French — and English fleets. — Partial action. — Arnold's expedition to New London. — York town invested. — Progress of the siege — and capitulation. — Efforts of Clinton for relief of Lord Cornwallis.

EARLY in 1781, the French made a spirited at-
tempt to gain possession of Jersey. The re-
mainder of the legion which had failed in 1779, with
another raised by the Prince de Luxembourg, were
placed under the command of the Baron de Rulle-
court. After sustaining some loss and many difficul-

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1781.
6th Jan.
Attack of
the French
on Jersey.

CHAP. ties by tempest, the baron landed with eight hundred
 XLI. men at the Banc des Violettes; reached during night
 1781. St. Helier's, the capital, and took prisoner Major
 Corbet the lieutenant-governor, who signed a capitulation for the whole island. Fortunately other officers were not infected with the same spirit of timidity: Major Pierson, on whom the command devolved, collected the troops, assailed the invaders, who were concentrated in the market-place, wounded Rullecourt, slew a considerable number, and compelled the remainder to surrender: but he did not survive to enjoy the fruits of his valour; almost the last shot fired by the enemy deprived him of life, and he fell in the prime of youth, and in the moment of glory. Corbet was tried by a court-martial, and deservedly sentenced to be superseded in his commission of lieutenant-governor.^a

6th June.

Progress of
the siege of
Gibraltar.

1780.

7th June.

Meanwhile the Spaniards continued to direct a great portion of their strength against Gibraltar. After the departure of Admiral Rodney they attempted, by means of fire-ships, to burn the fleet in the bay; but were repulsed by the valour and judgment of the British sailors, assisted by a well-directed fire from the garrison. Notwithstanding this failure, they formed a blockade, and the probabilities of relief were diminished by a successful negotiation with the emperor of Morocco for farming the ports of Tangier, Tetuan, and Larache, from which supplies and information had been hitherto frequently obtained. This advantage was gained by the Spaniards in consequence of a blameable negligence in the British ministry. On the commencement of hostilities, proposals were made to the Emperor of Morocco for farming these ports, but far from acceding to a proposition so injurious to the English, he imparted it to General Elliot, requiring

^a Beside the histories, periodical works, and gazettes, see the Life of General Dumouriez, vol. i. p. 445.

only, as the price of his friendship, naval stores for three vessels, to protect his coasts against the incensed Spaniards, the value of which did not exceed fifteen hundred pounds. Elliot, struck with this disinterestedness, advised the British government to double the emperor's demand, in order to retain so valuable a friend; but he had the mortification, on Admiral Rodney's arrival, to find that he brought no answer to the request. Ample time was afterward allowed for the ministry to repair their oversight; but after repeated applications to the British consul to learn the success of his applications, the Moorish monarch gradually withdrew his countenance and protection. He first permitted the Spaniards to capture British vessels within his ports, his officers answering the remonstrances of Mr. Logie, the counsel, with harshness and insult. Soon afterward the emperor commanded Mr. Logie to be conducted into his presence, and after reproaching the English nation in terms of great bitterness, ordered him to make his abode at Sallee. The consul had the address to soften his resentment, and even obtained a temporary protection for his fellow-subjects; but the Spaniards still augmenting their offers, while no counter-proposal was made by the British ministry, the emperor at length consented to banish the subjects of the crown of England from his dominions. He not only continued unmoved by the entreaties and remonstrances of Mr. Logie, but increased his severity by alienating the port of Tangier to Spain, in consequence of which the consul and all the English were made prisoners, and treated with great inhumanity, till the court of Madrid consented to their release.

This event was a severe misfortune to the besieged garrison, who had almost consumed the supplies brought by Admiral Rodney, and were reduced to the utmost distress, which the Spaniards increased by intercepting small vessels from Minorca and other ports, and by destroying the gardens without the

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XL.
1781.

20th Oct.

26th Nov.

Distress of
the garrison.

CHAP. lines. The scurvy made dreadful ravages, and the garrison experienced excessive misery.^b

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1781.
12th April
1781.
Relieved by
Darby.

From this extremity of wretchedness they were at length relieved by Admiral Darby, who convoyed, with the grand fleet, near a hundred ships laden with provisions. The garrison had been apprised of his approach, and at day-break his fleet was descried from the signal-house, though not yet discernible from below, by reason of a thick mist. But when the rising sun dispersed the vapour, the anxious garrison were gratified with the view of the whole convoy, led by several men of war, steering toward them in a compact body. The stores were landed in spite of opposition from the Spanish gun-boats and land batteries, and Darby, having completed his task sailed for the channel.

The town
bombardeed.

The joy of the garrison and inhabitants received, however, a severe check ; for the fleet was scarcely moored, when the Spaniards opened a severe battery and bombardment on the fortress and town. The fire impaired the fortifications, brought down large quantities of stone and rubbish from the rock, which blocked up the way and rendered repairs difficult, and by destroying the dwellings and warehouses, laid open those stores of provision which the merchants had amassed to deal out in scanty portions, and at exorbitant prices. The soldiery indulged in licentious plunder and wanton destruction ; drunken-

^b As a proof of the extreme distress of the garrison during this period, the following are selected from a long list of articles which had advanced to prices proportionately exorbitant. Fresh beef, veal, and mutton, 4s. 10½d. ; corned beef, 2s. 11d. ; potatoes, 2s. 6d. ; Sugar, 17s. 1d. ; and biscuit-dust from 10d. to 1s. per pound. The hind quarter of a sheep, with the head and tail, 7l. 10s. ; a pint of milk and water, 1s. 3d. ; a living pig, 9l. 14s. 9d. ; a sow large with pigs, 20l. ; a goat and kid, 18l. ; a milch cow, 50 guineas, reserving to the vendor a pint of milk per diem. The weekly allowance of the soldier (and many had children to maintain out of it) was 5 pounds and a quarter of bread ; 13 oz. of salt beef ; 13 oz. of pork, both almost in a state of putrescence ; 2 oz. and a quarter of butter, little better than rancid oil ; 12 oz. of raisins ; half a pint of pease ; a pint of Spanish beans ; a pint of wheat, which they ground into flour for puddings ; 4 oz. of rice, and a quarter of a pint of oil ; the inhabitants had no assistance from the stores.

ness and insubordination threatened fatal effects, but were suppressed by a judicious mixture of temporary forbearance, and subsequent wholesome severity.

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1781.

The Spaniards now appeared to have renounced all thoughts of a blockade ; provisions were received without restraint, and a second convoy from England, under the command of Captain Curtis, quieted every apprehension. But the heavy cannonades, and profuse discharges of shells, both from batteries and gun-boats, daily harassed the garrison, while the works of the besiegers proceeded with an alarming rapidity. As a protection against the gun and mortar boats, General Elliot cut down some brigs, and converted them into *prames* furnished with artillery. His judicious and well-directed fire did tremendous execution, blew up batteries and prostrated works ; but the diligence and perseverance of the besiegers still enabled them to continue their approaches ; and notwithstanding every opposition, their fourth line was completed, within three quarters of a mile of the walls, and so strong as to resist the fire of the garrison.

Fewer lives were lost in these tremendous assaults than would naturally be imagined, as in a period of fifty days of the most violent attack on the town and garrison, during which the enemy were computed to expend fifty-six thousand seven hundred and sixty shot, and twenty thousand one hundred and thirty-four shells, not more than seventy were killed and wounded. The troops were accustomed, after six months bombardment, to the discharge and effect of heavy artillery ; the firing of the enemy had shewn the weak places in the fortification, which the governor and engineers were indefatigable in strengthening, so that the garrison was in fact in a better state of defence than at the beginning of the attack.

12th Apr.
to 31st May.

To free himself, however, from the contiguity of the enemy, General Elliot executed a bold and fortunate enterprise. Having received from a deserter correct information of the position, strength, and

26th Nov.
Successful
sortie.

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XLI.

1781.

guards of the enemy, he ordered all the grenadiers and light infantry of the garrison, together with the twelfth regiment, and the German regiment called Hardenberg's^c, to assemble on the sands at midnight, and assail those stupendous works, the construction of which had cost so much labour and expense. With laudable prudence, the general kept his intentions profoundly secret till after sun-set on the evening when they were to be executed : the remaining interval was past in consultation, and the arrangement of measures for ensuring success. The detachment consisted of two thousand and fourteen men, beside three hundred sailors ; they were commanded by Brigadier-general Ross, but the valiant governor of the garrison attended in person. Although his orders to observe profound silence were strictly obeyed, the enemy were alarmed, and their sentries fired on the detachment. The British troops, having now no resource but their impetuous courage, pressed resolutely forward ; the Spaniards fled in every direction, and in an hour, by the industry and judgment of the pioneers and artillery-men, the flames burst forth from every quarter of the works, illuminating the troops and all the surrounding objects with a grand and horrific glare. The detachment regained the fortress in safety, after laying trains to the magazines, which throwing up large masses of timber in their explosion, augmented the conflagration. It was singular that the Spaniards made no effort to protect their works or prevent retreat : they were so little apprehensive of a sortie, that the report of the commanding officer was found already written against the relief of guard, declaring that "nothing extraordinary" had happened. The loss sustained by the British consisted in four privates killed, one lieutenant with twenty-four non-commissioned officers and privates wounded, and one

^c It was a remarkable circumstance that these two regiments, subjects of different powers, and selected for this service, fought side by side at the battle of Minden.

missing; and great part of this casualty was occasioned by two of the divisions firing on each other in the dark by mistake. Ten thirteen-inch mortars, and eighteen twenty-six pounders were spiked in the works: and the deliberation and order observed were so perfect, that neither musket, working tool, nor any other implement was lost. The success exceeded the most sanguine expectation, and justified the expression of the general in his public orders, that “the bravery and conduct of the whole detachment, officers, sailors, and soldiers, on the glorious occasion, surpassed his warmest acknowledgments.”

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1781.

While the Spaniards were exerting their force in unavailing attempts on Gibraltar, they also undertook, in conjunction with the French, the conquest of Minorca. With a combined force of sixteen thousand men, commanded by the Duke de Crillon, and a suitable train of artillery, they effected a landing, and commenced the siege of St. Philip’s castle, the principal fortress of the island. Their progress was not, however, commensurate to their expectations, and the year was wasted in unsuccessful efforts.

The enemy
land in
Minorca.

20th Aug.

After convoying this armament, the combined fleets, amounting to seventy sail, fifty of which were of the line, and some of the largest rate, reached the coast of England, and occupied the mouth of the Channel, from the islands of Scilly to Ushant. The destruction of the English marine was now confidently expected; but Admiral Darby having received information of the approach and strength of the enemy, prudently retired, with only twenty-one sail of the line, into Torbay, to await an attack. The French and Spanish commanders however differed in opinion, and in a council of war, the proposition to assail the English squadron in harbour was over-ruled by a large majority. After some unavailing attempts to intercept the homeward bound trade, this mighty armament was, at an early period of the year, compelled, by the sickness of the crews, and the miserable state

Naval
actions in
the Channel.

Sept.

CHAP.
XLI.
1781.

Engagement
between
Parker and
Zouttman,
5th Aug.

of the ships, to return to port without effecting any exploit worthy of notice. Admiral Darby, now reinforced to thirty sail of the line, cruised with so much vigilance and success, that the British trade was secure from molestation.

In the course of the year, many naval events occurred highly honourable to the naval character of the nation. Admiral Hyde Parker, returning from the Baltic with a convoy, was encountered near the Dogger Bank by the Dutch Admiral Zouttman, with a force considerably superior, both in number and condition. The Dutch did not, like their new allies the French and Spaniards, avoid an engagement; but both Admirals having taken the necessary measures for the safety of their convoys, commenced an action in which skill, judgment, and valour, were equally conspicuous on either side. They did not fire till within musket shot, and continued with unremitting fury for three hours and a half. The disabled fleets lay-to for some time, repairing their damages, when the Dutch admiral bore away, unopposed, for the Texel, Parker not being in a condition to attempt pursuit. Both squadrons suffered severely; the English lost one hundred and four killed, and three hundred and thirty-nine wounded: the Dutch did not publish their official return, but their killed and wounded were calculated at twelve hundred. Their ships were dreadfully shattered; the Hollandia sunk in the night after the engagement, with all her wounded on board, and the rest could with difficulty be kept above water till they reached the port. Although no advantage of capture resulted to the British fleet, the glory of victory was theirs, and the Dutch convoy was unable to proceed on its voyage. The brave admiral, on his return to the Nore, received the honour of a royal visit on board his ship; but no acts of civility or condescension could alter his resolution of resigning his command, which was imputed to indignation at the insufficiency and bad condition of his fleet.

In the West Indies, the perfidy and ingratitude of the Dutch received a severe chastisement. Sir George Rodney returning toward the close of the preceding year from New York, made, in conjunction with General Vaughan, a fruitless attempt to recapture St. Vincent's. Being soon afterward apprized of the rupture with Holland, he surrounded with his fleet St. Eustatia, an island of small extent, but strongly fortified by nature. The inhabitants composed of almost all trading nations could not be combined in views of defence, which the consternation of so sudden an attack rendered hopeless; the governor, M. De Graaf, surrendered the island, with its dependencies, St. Martin's and Saba, and the victors possessed themselves of an immense treasure. No small indignation was excited by a discovery that much of the merchandise was the property of British subjects, and apparently intended for the use of the enemy. Under the influence of this impression, the admiral rejected with disdain the application of the merchants of St. Christopher's, the nearest English island, enforced by Mr. Glanville, their solicitor-general, for a restitution. His severity was supposed to exceed the limits of justice, and became the source of much subsequent litigation^d. Beside the property on shore, valued at four millions, a frigate of thirty-six guns, five ships of war of inferior force, and a hundred and fifty sail of merchant-men, were taken in the bay, and a fleet of thirty sail richly laden, with their convoy a sixty-four, were pursued and brought back. The flag of Holland was kept for some time flying, and by means of this decoy, several French, American, and Dutch vessels became an easy prey. All the results of this acquisition were not however advantageous to England; the necessity of disposing of the merchandise facilitated the purchases by the subjects of all neutral powers, who, notwithstanding every precaution, conveyed the articles to the enemy

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1781.

Unsuccess-
ful attempt
on St. Vin-
cent's.
3d Feb.
Capture of
St. Eustatia.

^d See the papers in the Remembrancer, vol. xi. p. 293. 317. 342.

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1781.

2d May.

26th Nov.

Demerary
and Isse-
quibo.

14th Mar.

22d Mar.
The French
reinforced.29th April.
Partial en-
gagement.

at a cheaper rate, and in greater plenty, than they could otherwise have been procured. The captured treasure was dispatched to Europe with a convoy under Commodore Hotham, but twenty-five of the ships were taken by a French squadron under De la Motte Piquet, and thus the wealth of St. Eustatia continued to enrich the enemy. The island itself was surrendered to the French toward the end of the year, in a most dishonourable manner, by Colonel Cockburn.

Another attack on the property of the Dutch was made by a squadron of privateers, mostly equipped from Bristol, who boldly entering the difficult rivers of Demerary and Issequibo, captured, under the very guns of the forts, several vessels of considerable value. The terrified inhabitants immediately surrendered these settlements, together with the island of Berbice, to the governor of Barbadoes ; they claimed only the terms allowed to St. Eustatia, but were treated with much greater lenity.

Meanwhile a French fleet of twenty-five ships of the line, and one of fifty guns, sailed from Brest, commanded by De Suffrein and De Grasse ; they had on board six thousand land forces, and convoyed a merchant fleet of nearly three hundred sail. Twenty of the vessels of the line, and the fifty-gun ship, proceeded for Fort Royal in Martinique, where a junction with the French fleet already in that quarter would give a decided superiority over the British force. Admiral Rodney detached Sir Samuel Hood and Admiral Drake, with seventeen sail of the line, to cruise off Fort Royal Bay, for the purpose of intercepting the French admiral ; an engagement took place, but although the French were augmented by reinforcements to a majority of six, they remained at so great a distance, that not one in ten of their shot took effect. Some of the British ships, attempting to press into closer action, suffered severely, but the contest was, on the whole, undecisive, and unimportant.

On the arrival of the Russel at St. Eustatia, in a shattered condition, Sir George Rodney speedily completed his repairs, and proceeded to Barbadoes. The French commanders having failed in an attack on St. Lucie, were engaged in the reduction of Tobago. Rodney with his whole fleet came in sight of the French squadron, but although they no longer shewed their usual disposition to avoid an engagement, and he had the advantage of wind, prudential reasons justified him in declining a contest attended with great risk and little probable advantage. The island was valiantly defended and judiciously reinforced, and De Bouillé only effected its reduction by the inhuman and unmilitary practice of burning four plantations every day, till the governor capitulated. This conquest terminated the military operations of the year in the West Indies, and the French fleet being augmented by five sail of the line at Hispaniola, De Grasse proceeded to the Chesapeak, while Rodney returned to Europe for the benefit of his health, leaving the command of the fleet to Sir Samuel Hood.

The transactions on the continent of America since the close of the last campaign in the Carolinas, had been highly momentous. The spirit of disaffection which received a rude shock by the victory at Camden, was revived by the defeat of Major Ferguson; Lord Cornwallis, though alarmed for the safety of South Carolina, obtained from Virginia a reinforcement of two thousand six hundred men, under General Leslie, with whose assistance he still pursued his project of penetrating into North Carolina.

Incited by the state of General Washington's army, and the desire of making a diversion favourable to Lord Cornwallis, Sir Henry Clinton dispatched Brigadier-general Arnold, at the head of eighteen hundred men, to establish a post at Portsmouth on Elizabeth river, and to make an excursion into Virginia, to interest the natives on that side, in order to favour Lord Cornwallis's retreat, should it become necessary under the

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1781.
Capture of
Tobago by
the French.
10th May.
29th May.

2d June.

5th Aug.

Transactions
in America.19th Dec.
1780.
Lord Corn-
wallis rein-
forced.Arnold's ex-
pedition into
Virginia.

14th Dec.

C H A P.

XLI.

1781.

29th Dec.

1st Jan.
1781.
Mutiny in
the Ameri-
can army.

circumstances in which he found himself engaged. Arnold was instructed only to strike at the enemy's magazines if he could affect them without too much risk, and to conciliate the inhabitants by liberal proclamations. With a laudable prudence, which, however, subsequent events proved to be unnecessary, Sir Henry Clinton sent with General Arnold, Lieutenant-colonels Dundas and Simcoe, recommending them as officers of great experience and merit, in whom he placed implicit confidence, and with whom Arnold was enjoined to consult on every operation of consequence. Lord Cornwallis was also apprized of the extent and motives of this expedition, and invested with power to supersede General Arnold in the command. That brave officer arriving with only a thousand men in Hampton road, proceeded up James river, and, in the course of a few days, destroyed a valuable cannon foundry, a large quantity of public stores, and many vessels richly laden in James and Appomattox rivers, and succeeded in establishing the required post at Portsmouth.

The discontents in the American army, of which the British commander had gained intelligence by intercepted mails, now arose to a tremendous height. They originated in the misery of the troops for want of pay, clothing, and even food; congress was unable to afford the requisite supplies, and the army proceeded from murmurs to open complaint, and at length to revolt. With the year the term of enlistment of several corps expired; and the whole Pennsylvania line, taking advantage of the period, dismissed their officers, and seizing six field-pieces, declared their resolution to obtain justice from congress at Philadelphia. Sir Henry Clinton, hoping to derive advantage from this critical revolt, offered protection and pardon, and a full liquidation of all demands, to those who would join him, stipulating only for allegiance and submission to the British government; and not even requiring their service in the royal army,

unless they would enter as volunteers. The revolters, however, instead of yielding to these promises, gave up the British messengers to General Wayne, their commanding officer ; and congress having sent commissioners to negotiate an arrangement, mutual concessions were made, and half the revolters returned to the service. Thus this great event produced no other consequence than that of facilitating General Arnold's progress, by preventing Washington from sending detachments to oppose him.

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15th Jan.

Such was the general result of operations designed to favour Lord Cornwallis. When that nobleman commenced the campaign, General Green was encamped near Hick's Creek, on the east side of the Pedee, with a force consisting only of two thousand three hundred and seven men, of whom more than half were militia ; while Lord Cornwallis had under his command, at Wynnesborough and adjacent places, five thousand five hundred regulars, beside a numerous militia.

State of the
armies.

General Greene detached five hundred and forty men, under general Morgan, to gain the western frontiers of South Carolina, and threaten the British post at Ninety-Six, while the remaining force alarmed the country in front of Camden. Lord Cornwallis, preparatory to his invasion of North Carolina, detached Colonel Tarleton with one thousand men against Morgan, and to favour this design, himself moved toward Turkey Creek, but was prevented from effectual co-operation. Tarleton, after a fatiguing march, found the enemy at a place called the Cowpens, augmented by reinforcements to an equality in point of numbers with himself, but inferior in cavalry. He attacked them with his usual impetuosity, and having defeated the first and second line, was in hopes of a complete victory. Some mistake however appears to have prevented the charge of the British cavalry in time to hinder the Americans from rallying, they became in their turn the assailants, drove back the fatigued and

Tarleton de-
feated at the
Cowpens.

17th Jan.

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unsupported infantry ; terror spread on every side ; the legion cavalry disgracefully fled, regardless of repeated commands, while the infantry were slain or captured to the number of seven hundred. Colonel Tarleton himself, at the head of fourteen officers, and about forty men of the seventeen regiment of dragoons, cut his way through the opposing cavalry, and reached Lord Cornwallis. The Americans gained great honour by this important and unexpected victory, and the defeat was additionally distressing to the British army, as it was attended with the irreparable loss of all the light troops.

29th Jan.
Lord Corn-
wallis pur-
sues Mor-
gan.

29th.

31st Jan.

2d Feb.
Passes the
Catawba.

This disaster, injurious and portentous as it was, did not deter Lord Cornwallis from invading North Carolina. Animated by the hope of recapturing General Morgan's prisoners, he rapidly advanced toward the Catawba, but finding his march retarded by his baggage, caused all that exceeded the limits of the most strict necessity to be destroyed. He reached the banks of the river two hours after the American general had crossed, but in that small interval, a rise of the water prevented his passage, and afforded time for Morgan to send forward his prisoners to Virginia, and collect the militia to dispute the fords. General Greene, judging this crisis worthy of his personal interference, ordered his army to join Morgan by forced marches, and himself repaired to the shores of the Catawba with still greater expedition, riding a hundred and sixty miles across the country. Although the river was nearly five hundred yards wide, and the fords defended by strong bodies of the enemy, Lord Cornwallis passed, with only four killed and thirty-six wounded. Colonel Tarleton was dispatched in pursuit of the retreating militia ; and the cavalry under his command, by gallantly routing five hundred men at Tarrant's Tavern, retrieved a portion of the honour, though they could not regain the advantages, lost at the Cowpens.

From the Catawba the British army pursued the enemy to the Yadkin, a march, or rather a race of thirty-eight miles, rendered extremely difficult by bad roads and swelled creeks, and a severe and rainy winter. The British troops bore with heroic fortitude the privation of spirits, and even of food, but fortune again rescued the flying foe from their grasp, by an almost miraculous fall of the Yadkin to facilitate the passage of the fugitives, while that of the pursuers was impeded by a sudden rise.

The two divisions of the American army now effected a junction, and the British commander still hoped to impede their retreat into Virginia, though, from the state of the river, he could not cross without a circuitous march of fifty miles. He was deceived by reports of difficulties in passing the river Dan, but after a vigorous and incessant pursuit, he had the mortification to find the enemy effected their retreat without impediment: General Greene acquired great applause by his activity, judgment, and intelligence.

Disappointed in the main object of his pursuit, Lord Cornwallis returned by slow marches to Hillsborough where he erected the royal standard, and, by proclamation, invited all loyal subjects to join him in arms, and with ten days provisions.^e Although the loyalists of North Carolina had been greatly diminished and depressed by persecutions, General Greene re-passed the Dan to prevent the effects of the proclamation. Colonel Pyle had collected a body of nearly three hundred loyalists, for whose protection Colonel Tarleton was detached with the cavalry, and a small body of infantry. At the same time Greene dispatched Lieutenant-colonel Lee to prevent the junction of this corps with the British army. The loyalists meeting Lee's detachment, and mistaking them for friends, were surrounded, and although they im-

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Arrives at,

and crosses
the Yadkin.The enemy
retreat into
Virginia.Royal stan-
dard erected
at Hillsbo-
rough.24th Feb.
Massacre of
the loyalists.

25th Feb.

^e Many came in, but, seeing the distressed state of the British army, retired.

CHAP. plored quarter on their knees, were all inhumanly
XLI. butchered.

1781.
Further
retreat of
Lord Corn-
wallis.

6th Mar.

15th Mar.
Battle of
Guildford.

The re-appearance of the Americans in North Carolina, impeded the supplies of the British army; and the country being nearly exhausted, Lord Cornwallis retreated to a new position on Allamance Creek, between Haw and Deep rivers. This measure, though dictated by imperious necessity, did not escape censure, as the period limited in the proclamation for the junction of the loyalists, which had subjected the most zealous to punishment for having indiscreetly shewn their attachment to the British cause, was not yet expired; they afterward reluctantly joined the army. The Americans advancing as Lord Cornwallis retired, an ineffectual attempt was made to beat up their quarters; General Greene, though greatly superior in numbers, cautiously avoiding an engagement till the arrival of expected reinforcements.

At length having received all his supplies, and chosen an advantageous position near Guildford courthouse, he offered battle, and the British commander, with an army reduced to less than two thousand men, eagerly advanced to the conflict against five thousand. The engagement, which was long, and maintained with determined valour on both sides, terminated in a glorious and honourable victory to the British troops; but the commander had to lament the loss of nearly one-third of his force, five hundred and thirty-two being killed, wounded, and missing, including several meritorious and esteemed officers. His troops were exhausted with the fatigue of a long march, unprovided with tents, and so miserably destitute of provisions, that their allowance on the ensuing day amounted to no more than a quarter of a pound of flour, and the same quantity of lean beef. The night was dark and tempestuous, the rain fell in torrents on the unprotected, fatigued, and famishing troops, while the cries of the wounded and dying aggravated the horrors of the scene.

General Greene retreated to the iron-works on C H A P.
X E L. Troublesome Creek; but Lord Cornwallis, finding pursuit impossible, retired by easy marches toward Cross Creek, leaving seventy of his wounded, under a flag of truce, to the humanity of the enemy. Before his departure he issued a proclamation, reciting his victory, calling on all loyal subjects to return to government, and promising protection and pardon to those who obeyed. Far from being able to afford assistance to others, he found that Cross Creek could not supply his followers with necessaries; they were worn down by the hardships and fatigues of a march of six hundred miles, in which they had forded several large rivers, and numberless creeks, several of which would in any other country be reckoned large rivers, without tents or covering against the climate, and often without provisions. He found himself, therefore, compelled to a further retreat, and preferred 1781.
Lord Corn-
wallis re-
treats to Wil-
mington; 7th April. Wilmington, a sea-port, to Camden, where Lord Rawdon was threatened with an attack.

After pursuing for some time the track of the retreating army, General Greene marched toward Camden, while Lord Cornwallis, embarrassed with a choice of difficulties, and his force reduced to fourteen hundred and thirty-five men, took advantage of Greene's absence to proceed through North Carolina to Virginia. He invades
Virginia. 29th April.

Lord Rawdon was unapprized of the enemy's approach, and when General Greene, with a force exceeding two thousand men, encamped at Hobkirk's Hill, his garrison at Camden was only eight hundred, and reduced to a short allowance of provisions. He did not however wait to be attacked; but with officer-like decision sallied forth, and after a severe conflict Lord Raw-
don defeats
the enemy
at Hobkirk's
Hill. 25th. routed the Americans, killing and wounding five hundred, but his own loss amounted to two hundred and fifty-eight, which in the relative state of forces, was more than equivalent to that of the enemy. The attack was however not less judicious than spirited,

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1781.
Activity of
American
partizans.

23d April.

7th May.

Camden
evacuated.

10th May.

11th and
15th May,
other forts
taken by the
enemy.
Their suc-
cess in Geor-
gia.

5th June.

21st May.
Failure at
Ninety Six.

for the superiority of the invading army, and their force of artillery, must soon have rendered defence impossible.

The return of an American army to the province of South Carolina, gave additional impulse to the spirit of disaffection, which had been assiduously encouraged by the partizans Sumpter and Marion. Aided by Colonel Lee, whom General Greene detached for that purpose, they reduced Fort Watson, on the river Santee, a task which they accomplished without artillery or intrenching tools, by means of a work on an unusual plan, which overlooked the fort, and from which rifle-men fired with unerring aim on every individual who ventured to appear. By seizing the passes they retarded, but could not prevent the junction of Colonel Watson with Lord Rawdon, who thus replaced the numbers he had lost at Hobkirk's Hill.

Intelligence of this reinforcement being conveyed to General Greene, he shifted his position to avoid an attack; Lord Rawdon evacuated Camden, after destroying the least portable stores, and retired to Monk's Corner, for the protection of Charlestown, the defences of which were in a feeble state, Lord Cornwallis having before his departure demolished some of the old works, and the new not being yet completed. About the same time Lee and Marion, captured Fort Motte on the Congaree, Orangeburgh yielded to Sumpter, and Lee reduced Fort Granby.

Satisfied with these successes in the north and north-east parts of South Carolina, General Greene directed his views to the western frontier of that province, and to Georgia. Godolphin, on the banks of the Savannah, soon surrendered, and Augusta was reduced by a repetition of the expedient employed at Fort Watson.

Meanwhile General Greene laid siege to Ninety Six, where the commander, Colonel Cruger, by the interception of Lord Rawdon's messengers, was kept

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in ignorance of the recent transactions. The defences of this village were incomplete, and the garrison consisted only of five hundred and fifty provincial troops; but the spirit and ability of the commanding officer frustrated the attacks of the besiegers. Once he destroyed their works by a masterly sally, and interrupted, by similar efforts, the progress of new ones commenced at a greater distance. This hazardous defence was continued with unremitting exertion during three weeks, when the garrison were reduced to the greatest extremities for want of water; but their spirits were revived by intelligence from an intrepid loyalist, that Lord Rawdon was marching to raise the seige. General Greene had more precise information, and after an ineffectual endeavour to carry the place by storm, retreated across the Saluda with sufficient celerity to evade pursuit.

Lord Rawdon had, however, no intention to retain possession of Ninety-Six; he was only anxious to rescue the loyalists from the vengeance of their countrymen, against which he knew that neither sentiments of humanity nor the terms of a capitulation afforded sufficient protection. The division of his force for the escort of these unfortunate persons to Charlestown, encouraged General Greene again to hang on his army, till the heat of the season compelled both parties to seek repose. General Greene, being joined by the detachments under Lee, Sumpter, and Marion, encamped on the high hills of Santee, while Lord Rawdon retired to Orangeburgh, and shortly afterward the impaired state of his health rendered it necessary for him to revisit his native land.

During the late disasters, the disaffection of the Americans, and the treachery of those who, under pretence of loyalty, had joined the British standard, were more than usually apparent. An example to deter others from similar attempts was among the last public acts of Lord Rawdon; Colonel Isaac Haynes, who had taken the oath and served in the British

Suspension
of opera-
tions.

Execution
of Colonel
Haynes.

July.

C H A P. army, being captured fighting in the American cause,
 XLI. was condemned to death by a court of inquiry at
 1781. Charlestown as a traitor. His execution occasioned
 4th Aug. a threatening proclamation from General Greene, and
 26th Aug. was the subject of much public discussion in Eng-
 land, but the conduct of Lord Rawdon was deemed
 completely justifiable.^f

Battle at After the departure of Lord Rawdon, the chief
 Eutaw command devolved on Colonel Stewart. General
 Springs. Greene had already achieved, by valour, judgment,
 22d Aug. and perseverance, the chief object of the campaign,
 recovering the principal part of South Carolina, and
 confining the English within the three great rivers
 Santee, Congaree, and Edisto. Being reinforced by
 a considerable body of militia and other troops, he
 marched, as soon as the weather would permit, to
 attack the British army, who fell back from Wateree
 to Eutaw. Although Colonel Stewart was apprized
 5th Sept. of Greene's approach by two deserters, he gave no
 credit to their intelligence, but sent four hundred un-
 armed men on that very road, to procure vegetables,
 the greater part of whom were taken prisoners. The
 few who escaped spread alarm, not unaccompanied
 with terror. An obstinate and bloody engagement
 however ensued, in which the artillery of both par-
 ties was several times taken and retaken; both claim-
 ed the victory, and nearly seven hundred were slain,
 wounded, and missing on each side. The British
 having kept the field that night and the following
 day, retired to Monk's Corner, and subsequently to
 Charlestown Neck, while General Greene, too
 much enfeebled to make an attempt on the city,
 regained his former encampment on the high hills
 of Santee; thus terminating the eventful campaign
 in South Carolina.^g

^f See Papers on this subject, *Remembrancer*, vol. xiii. p. 121.

^g In the ensuing year, the provincial legislature recompensed the services of General Greene by the donation of an estate of the value of ten thousand guineas. See *Remembrancer*, vol. xiv. p. 140.

During these transactions, Sir Henry Clinton was prevented, by the reduced state of his force, from undertaking any distant enterprize. Early in the year he felt considerable apprehensions for the safety of New York. The French having attained a superiority of naval power in consequence of the loss of the Culloden man of war in a tempest, while the America was separated from the fleet, and the Bedford dismantled, their admiral, availing himself of this accident, blocked up the port of Portsmouth in Virginia, where General Arnold was established. General Washington embarked a large body of troops under La Fayette to act in that quarter, and entertained sanguine hopes of surrounding and capturing Arnold, but they were frustrated by the languor and ineptitude of the French general and admiral; and the dispatch of a reinforcement of two thousand men from New York, under General Phillips, enabled the British to resume offensive operations. After completing the fortification of Portsmouth, General Phillips ravaged the country, and destroyed a large quantity of valuable stores, without loss, and almost without opposition. Having achieved the objects of his march, and left a garrison in the small fort at Mill Point, Phillips was preparing to rejoin Sir Henry Clinton, according to his original instructions, when he received intelligence of the march of Lord Cornwallis, accompanied with a request that the armies should unite at Petersburgh. Compliance with this demand was the last military act of General Phillips, who after a short illness, died of a malignant fever, and the command again devolved on General Arnold. The junction of the armies was effected without difficulty, Lord Cornwallis having reached Petersburgh, with only slight opposition, at the head of sixteen hundred men, with four pieces of cannon.

In this interval, the commander in chief, unapprized of Lord Cornwallis's movement, had sent a considerable reinforcement to the army in Virginia, hoping to

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Expedition
of the enemy
against
Portsmouth.
23d Jan.26th Mar.
General
Phillips
ravages
Virginia.

7th May.

9th.
His death.20th May.
Arrival of
Lord Corn-
wallis.

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facilitate the return of all to co-operate in the defence of New York, which he considered in danger of an attack. His further intentions were, if the city should be secure, to move as high as possible up the Chesapeake, and by the effect of an operation which had been preconcerted with General Haldimand, who commanded in Canada, to make an entire division between the united colonies, and, inclosing the armies, ravage on either side, as circumstances might require. Lord Cornwallis, however, unacquainted with Clinton's views, expeditiously crossed James river in pursuit of La Fayette, dispatching two bodies of troops, under Colonels Tarleton and Simcoe, in different directions to destroy stores and provisions.

Pursuit of
La Fayette.

La Fayette rested his only hope in meeting with General Wayne, who was advancing to join him with a body of troops from Maryland. He retreated with so much celerity that pursuit soon became hopeless, but the two detached expeditions were eminently prosperous. Colonel Tarleton, with his usual speed and intrepidity, reached Charlottesville, and broke up the session of the general assembly of the province, taking seven of its members, and one member of the general congress, prisoners ; Mr. Jefferson, president of the province, narrowly escaped. Tarleton in his progress destroyed several waggons laden with clothing and stores, and at Charlottesville a thousand new firelocks, four hundred barrels of gun-powder, with considerable quantities of tobacco and cloathing.

and Colonel
Simcoe.

Colonel Simcoe was equally successful : the enemy, under Baron Stuben, had removed to the opposite side of the river Fluvanna, but by an ingenious feint he induced them to abandon their stores, which were destroyed by a small detachment under Captain Stevenson and Cornet Wolsey, who passed the river in canoes.

Despair of
the Ameri-
cans.

The progress of the British army in pursuit of La Fayette was attended with general destruction of stores and property. The distress of the Americans

was now extreme ; their operations retarded by the want of enthusiasm and public confidence, their paper currency so much depreciated that it no longer answered the purposes of its emission, while the recent ravages in the hitherto favoured province of Virginia, completed the public despair. The incapacity of congress to proceed in the contest was ascertained by intercepted dispatches, and the prisoners taken by Colonel Tarleton represented as the prevailing sentiment, that if Great Britain could hinder the intended co-operation of the French fleet and army with the native forces, during the ensuing autumn, the French alliance would be dissolved, and an union with the mother-country cordially embraced both by congress and the people.^h No exertion was necessary on the part of the British armies ; a system studiously defensive, preventing all splendid advantages on the side of their opponents, would have reduced them to despair, and frustrated all hopes of ultimate success.

Both the French and American commanders were sensible of the necessity of effecting some great achievement to reanimate the drooping cause ; and when M. de Barras arrived with a squadron of ships, General Washington, in an interview with him and Rochambeau, proposed an attack on New York. This appeared to be the only exploit of sufficient importance to claim their exertions, as the march of Lord Cornwallis to Virginia was not yet known.

Sir Henry Clinton being apprised of these intentions, by an express intercepted in the Jerseys, forwarded dispatches to accelerate the return of the detachments from Virginia. He did not, however, insist on their immediately quitting Lord Cornwallis, if he was engaged in a movement which required their assistance ; or if he would employ them in co-operating with the loyalists in the upper part of the Chesapeake, and upon the Susquehanna, which would

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Projects of
the enemy
against
New York.

21st May.

June.
Clinton re-
quires troops
from Vir-
ginia.

^h Tarleton's Campaigns, p. 297.

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1781.
30th June.6th July.
The order counter-
manded.

11th July.

Lord Corn-
wallis sta-
tioned at
York Town.1st to 22d
August.6th July.
The enemy
menace New
York.

21st & 23d.

18th Aug.
Arrival of
De Grasse.30th Aug.
Arrival of
Sir Samuel
Hood.

have made an effectual diversion of General Washington's force. This plan not meeting the approbation of Lord Cornwallis, he resolved to send back the troops, and according to his understanding of Sir Henry Clinton's dispatches, re-passed James river, and retired to Portsmouth.

As the British troops were about to embark, La Fayette, who had joined General Wayne, made an approach to harass their rear, but, instead of gaining the expected advantage, was himself attacked, and night alone saved him from destruction. Before the British troops could put to sea, Sir Henry Clinton wrote two dispatches, expressing disapprobation at the abandonment of the neck of land at Williamsburgh, requiring Lord Cornwallis to resume that position, and fortify himself in Old Point Comfort, as the best naval station which he could protect, with or without the addition of York Town, as he should find most convenient; and he was permitted to retain the troops which he had been required to return.

In pursuance of what he considered to be the spirit of these instructions, Lord Cornwallis surveyed Old Point Comfort, and finding neither that nor Portsmouth a sufficiently defensive station for ships, evacuated them, and fortified the towns of York and Gloucester.

Meanwhile General Washington having effected a junction with Rochambeau, appeared more than once in force before New York, with the seeming intention of making an attack as soon as the co-operation of De Grasse could be ascertained; but on his arrival, his pilots refusing to steer his ships over the bar of New York, the attack was abandoned, and the united French and American armies, after several feints, marched across the Jerseys to Philadelphia.

Although the intention of Count De Grasse to visit America was well known, it was not conceived that he would employ his whole armament in that expedition, and neglect the convoy of the homeward-

bound trade. Sir Samuel Hood therefore followed him with only fourteen sail of the line, and, on his arrival, Admiral Graves (who as senior took command of the squadron) possessed only nineteen sail of the line, to oppose twenty-eight. De Grasse having received proper information from La Fayette, forwarded to the main army the land force he had conveyed from the West Indies, and blocked up York river, with four ships of the line, and several frigates, while the remainder of the fleet was anchored in Lynhaven Bay, within the Capes of Virginia.

In this position they were discovered by Admiral Graves; a partial action ensued in which considerable damage was done to both fleets; no ship was taken, but the Terrible, a British man of war, was rendered incapable of future service, and burnt. The fleets continued in sight of each other several days; but no advantage of numbers or wind could encourage the French to make an attack; and the admiral, at length, returned to the Chesapeake, where de Barras had arrived with his squadron, and fourteen transports laden with heavy artillery and military stores. The British admiral, finding the position unassailable, retired to New York to refit.

Soon after the arrival of Lord Cornwallis in Virginia, General Arnold returned to Sir Henry Clinton, who, now employed him in an attack on New London in Connecticut. Although deceived in his information respecting the fortifications, Arnold took the town, and a fort called Griswold, by assault, destroyed fifty pieces of cannon, and an immense quantity of military stores, and burned twelve ships, the flames of which spreading to the town, great part was consumed.

The allied armies, intent on the project of besieging Lord Cornwallis, did not suffer their attention to be diverted by any other object. Their proceedings being arranged at a council of war held on board the Ville de Paris, the flag-ship of Count de Grasse, the forces were landed in the neighbourhood of Williams-

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1791.

30th Aug.

5th Sept.
Partial ac-
tion between
the fleets.

10th.

Arnold's
expedition
to New Lon-
don.York town
invested.

14th Sept.

25th.

C H A P.
XLI.1781.
28th Sept.6th and 9th
October.14th Oct.
Two re-
doubts
stormed.

16th.

Lord Corn-
wallis at-
tempts a re-
treat.

burgh, and being joined by those under La Fayette, and M. de St. Simon, encamped before York Town.

Lord Cornwallis did not impede the approaches of the enemy, although La Fayette, with only two thousand men, was within a short distance of him, and unsupported; but appears to have relied with sanguine confidence on relief from New York, which Sir Henry Clinton expressed hopes might arrive by the fifth of October. In expectation of this succour, Lord Cornwallis, to the astonishment of General Washington, withdrew his army within the works of the town, which were immediately occupied by the enemy, and the post at Gloucester blockaded.¹

The time however elapsed, and no succours arrived; the enemy rapidly advanced their works and completed their batteries, maintaining an incessant cannonade, which damaged the unfinished fortifications of the town, silenced the artillery, and occasioned considerable slaughter. The garrison were indefatigable in opening new embrasures, and particularly annoyed the invaders from two redoubts advanced three hundred yards in front of the works. These were stormed by parties of French and Americans, separately employed on the service to excite emulation, and afterward, by indefatigable industry, joined to the works of the besiegers. The defences of the town were at length completely ruined, and although vigorous and successful sorties, conducted by Lieutenant-Colonels Abercrombie and Lake, retarded the approach of the enemy, Lord Cornwallis was convinced that his position was no longer tenable. He attempted to escape, by transporting his army across the river in the night; but after he had landed a part on the opposite shore, a storm prevented the return of the boats, and the few troops who had been ferried over, with difficulty rejoined the garrison.

¹ See Washington's letters to congress on that subject, dated Oct. 1.

In this extremity, Lord Cornwallis surrendered his whole army prisoners of war to General Washington, as commander of the combined force, and the vessels in the harbour to De Grasse ; the troops as prisoners to the United States, the seamen to the French King. The garrison obtained the same honours of war as had been granted by Sir Henry Clinton at Charlestown ; private property was retained, and the officers were allowed their freedom on parole. The tenth article of the capitulation^k was most exposed to censure, as it yielded up the loyalists, without protection, to the mercy of those who had already persecuted them with such unrelenting savagery ; but in extenuation, it was alleged that the British commander secured the safety of these persons under another form, by obtaining permission for the Bonetta sloop of war to sail for New York, unsearched, with as many soldiers on board as he should think fit, provided they were accounted for in any future exchange. This article was devised, and used as the means of conniving at the safe conduct of the loyalists.^l The garrison at the time of the surrender amounted to five thousand nine hundred and fifty men, but only four thousand and seventeen were fit for duty, while the besiegers were nineteen thousand. They acquired by the conquest a large train of artillery, with a considerable quantity of arms, ammunition and stores, a frigate, two ships of twenty guns, and a great number of transports and other vessels.

During the progress of this disastrous event, Sir Henry Clinton had used every exertion to assist Lord Cornwallis. He was deceived even at the moment of Sir Samuel Hood's arrival, in his information on the

Efforts of Clinton.

^k The article was in these words, " Natives or inhabitants of different parts of this country, at present in York or Gloucester, are not to be punished on account of having joined the British army." Answer, " This article cannot be assented to, being altogether of civil resort."

^l The plea of necessity, and the security afforded by using the Bonetta sloop as an asylum, did not tranquillize the feelings, or calm the apprehensions of the loyalists throughout America. The word *punished*, in the 10th article, was construed as an admission of guilt, and of consequent right in the victors to prosecute them for acts of allegiance to their lawful sovereign.

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comparative force of the fleets; nor could he believe the French admiral had left the West Indies without detaching any part of his force for protection of the trade, or that Sir George Rodney would, unless assured of a superiority, have proceeded with three ships of the line for Europe, and left others in the West Indies, contrary to his positive orders from government to watch and controul the operations of De Grasse. Sir Samuel Hood contributed to Sir Henry Clinton's error, by a positive statement that he possessed a force superior to that of the enemy; an assurance which was not known to be unfounded, till after the engagement between Graves and de Grasse on the fifth of September. Sir Henry justly considered an attack on Lord Cornwallis at York Town impossible, unless the British fleet was overmatched in the Chesapeak; he knew that the original intention of the combined forces was to attack New York, and therefore considered their first efforts against York Town as a feint. Yet he imparted the intelligence he received to Lord Cornwallis, countermanded his first order for returning the detachments, and sent all the recruits and convalescents he could spare from the defence of New York, Long Island, and Staten Island which required nine thousand men, for the augmentation of his lordship's force. When the intention to attack York Town became certain, Clinton prepared to dispatch a reinforcement of seven thousand men, but the condition of the fleet delayed their sailing till the nineteenth of October, the day on which the British army surrendered. On his arrival off the Chesapeak, Sir Henry Clinton received information that Lord Cornwallis had capitulated, which rendered unnecessary the plans he had preconcerted with the admiral for forcing the enemy at anchor, and taking up a position within them in James river. The practicability of this attempt was ascertained by Captain Elphinstone in the Experiment, who had reconnoitred the enemy's position, and made the

signal accordingly. Had Lord Cornwallis not surrendered, it was Sir Henry Clinton's intention to land his forces on that river, and move toward the enemy, Lord Cornwallis making a sally to favour their joint operations. The terms in which Lord Cornwallis announced and accounted for his capture, occasioned a series of discussions. On his arrival at New York, his Lordship complained that his service was slighted in some instances, and in others not adequately supported by the commander in chief. His plan for reducing Virginia had been approved, he said, by the ministry, and was favoured by the King, but discouraged by Clinton; and in his public dispatch on the surrender of York Town; he accused Sir Henry Clinton of withholding a reinforcement which he had positively promised by the fifth of October.

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In answer to these allegations, Sir Henry Clinton alleged that the plan for invading Virginia the most warlike of all the provinces, was injudicious as to time and circumstances, improperly forced on administration by an inferior, without the privity of his superior officer, and undertaken in a rash and unadvised manner.^m His positive orders were to consider the preservation of South Carolina, and safety of Charlestown, paramount to all other objects, both which were endangered and even lost to view, by the chase of Greene across North Carolina, and the subsequent incursion into Virginia. In that province Sir Henry Clinton had never projected any solid operation, convinced that the predatory and destructive excursions he had directed, added to the general distress, would have terminated the American war, if the British army could be preserved from any serious disaster.

^m It is presumed, however, his lordship's error arose from the circumstance of expecting to succeed to the command, as Sir Henry Clinton, after the capture of Charlestown, had requested leave to resign to him, which his lordship expecting would take place, transmitted his own plans to ministers (as being the most expeditious mode) without consulting with Sir Henry Clinton, whose resignation was not accepted. See letter from Lord George Germaine, dated July 7, 1781, in Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative, page 36.

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Washington's troops had no object but New York to which their attacks could be directed, had not Lord Cornwallis presented himself to their aim; and many errors were alleged against his mode of defence. He was blamed for posting himself injudiciously at York and Gloucester; for not attacking the enemy in detail as they were forming the siege, when the corps under the command of La Fayette at Williamsburg did not consist of more than two thousand men, and might with ease have been dislodged or captured before the junction of the other troops; and for neglecting easy and certain means of escape from the overwhelming force which ultimately engulfed him. The relief by means of the fleet was only promised if the ships could be enabled to sail by the fifth of October, and the promise was accompanied with an instruction to Lord Cornwallis to use every exertion for saving at least part of the army, should he have reason to apprehend that reinforcements could not arrive sufficiently early.

These complaints and assertions on either side have occasioned a difference of opinion on this event, which was magnified by the Americans and their friends far beyond its real importance: congress celebrated it with rejoicings and thanksgivings, their droopings cause appeared to revive, and all past reverses to be forgotten. Subsequent resolutions in Great Britain justified these exhibitions of ardent joy; but the capture of Lord Cornwallis's army of four thousand men fit for duty, though felt with anguish and dejection by all loyal subjects, might easily have been repaired, had the spirit of the nation warranted an adequate exertion of its resources.ⁿ

ⁿ In these transactions I have consulted, beside the histories and Gazettes, the pamphlets published by Lord Cornwallis and Sir Henry Clinton, and Tarleton's Campaigns, and have been assisted by private information and correspondence.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND.

1781—1782.

Conduct of neutral powers. — Prussia admitted to the armed confederacy. — Unsuccessful efforts for a mediation. — Altered conduct of the Emperor of Germany — he joins the armed confederacy — his increasing partiality toward France. — State of the public mind — meeting of parliament — debates on the addresses — on the capture of Saint Eustatia. — Motion against the war by Sir James Lowther. — Debates on the treatment of Mr. Laurens — he is discharged — recess. — Proceedings in public meetings. — Petition of the common-hall of London, for peace and a change of ministry. — Admiral Kempenfelt's unsuccessful expedition. — Capture of Saint Christopher's — Nevis — Montserrat — and Minorca. — Fox's motions on the ill success of the navy. — Motions in both houses respecting the conduct and characters of individuals. — On the treatment of Colonel Haynes — for an inquiry into the causes of Lord Cornwallis's surrender — on Lord Sackville's peerage — on the promotion of General Arnold. — Fox's renewed motion respecting the navy. — General Conway's motion against the war. — Altercation between Lord North and Colonel Barré. — Debates on the new taxes. — General Conway's second motion. — The ministry in a minority. — Bill to enable the King to make peace with America. — Lord John Cavendish's motion against the ministry. — Lord North declares the cabinet dissolved — his farewell address to the house. — Lord Shelburne's intended motion. — Character of Lord North.

DURING these events, the administration were in a continual state of alarm and solicitude; distresses were augmenting, while hope and consolation almost vanished from their view. None of the continental powers shewed a disposition to make effectual exertions for the benefit of Great Britain; and while the efforts of hostility were open, earnest, and

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Prussia
admitted to
the armed
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January.

Efforts at
mediation.

unremitting, those of friendship, if indeed a jealous neutrality could deserve that name, were languid, cold and feeble.

The King of Prussia, still animated by his wonted aversion, used every intrigue and petty artifice to injure the interest of England. By a public letter to his minister of finances, he ordered all Prussian subjects to withdraw their money from the British funds, as a general bankruptcy was inevitable. He endeavoured to persuade the Empress of Russia, that the accession of the Dutch to the armed neutrality occasioned their war with England, and that the commencement of hostilities was the *casus fæderis* of the league. Although the Empress was not deluded by this insinuation, she cooled in her attachment toward England, and became proportionately desirous to extend and strengthen the obnoxious confederacy. The King of Prussia was at length included as a contracting party, and permitted gross abuses to be practised under the sanction of his flag, while in all his public acts, he bitterly inveighed against them.

Meanwhile attempts were renewed, to terminate hostilities by mediation ; but even in these, a disposition to depress Great Britain was constantly visible. The first offer was, to arrange disputes by a congress of English, French, Spanish, and American ministers, under the auspices of Austria and Russia. It was understood that a general suspension of arms would be a preliminary proposition. Although the British ministry rejected so disadvantageous a measure, yet they exerted themselves to facilitate the mediation. Spain pretended that a negotiation was already commenced, through the medium of Mr. Cumberland, then resident at Madrid : this pretext was removed by his recall, but Spain gave no promise of acceding to the congress. The conduct of France was equally evasive, but both powers cajoled the Empress with flattering compliments and unlimited professions of respect. Great Britain returned the first definitive an-

swer by declaring her readiness to meet in congress with France and Spain, but never to permit the interference of any foreign power between her and her rebellious subjects. This declaration served as a theme to the Bourbon courts, who declared they would never make a public sacrifice of their honour and good faith by abandoning the Americans.

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At length, after the interchange of numerous papers, Prince Kaunitz, who had been principally engaged in managing the conferences, declared, that the answers of France and Spain precluded all hopes of a favourable termination : the principles they strove to maintain, convinced him that all attempts at conciliation would be ill-timed. Spain manifested more passion and inflexibility than France ; the Catholic King expressing particular acrimony, and affecting peculiar causes of complaint.

Mediation
ineffectual.
September.

The Austrian minister accompanied this recital with some ambiguous expressions ; he admitted the arguments of England to be fair and honourable, but too lofty for the force of the nation. When the determination not to permit the introduction of American affairs was disclosed, he sarcastically said, “whoever succeeds in making a peace for you on these terms, *Erit mihi magnus Apollo.*” He expressed his sentiments more fully when he announced the failure of the negotiation. “If you have not strength enough,” he said, “to support your rights, you must yield to superior force, and dire necessity. I own when I hear it alleged that the honour of France must not be sacrificed by abandoning the Americans, I answer as an Englishman would, what have I to do with the honour of France ; she herself sacrificed it at the moment when she contracted a traitorous and unwarrantable connexion with the King’s rebellious subjects. We can afford her no other choice than that of the most proper and becoming manner of receding from that connexion. But these sentiments will be unavailing, even in the mouth of an

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English minister, unless you can maintain them by force in every quarter. Your present difficulties and dangers seem to require important concessions; but I shall applaud the national spirit and vigour if they render them unnecessary."

This opinion of a foreign minister respecting the transactions of Great Britain, would merit little notice, did they not indicate the altered temper of the Austrian cabinet. At the decease of the Empress Maria Theresa, in November, 1780, great expectations were formed from the vigour and spirit of Joseph II. But Kaunitz infused into his mind a partiality for France, to which he had previously shewn a decided repugnance. Great Britain endeavoured to gain the friendship of the Emperor by liberal offers, and among others, to open the navigation of the Scheldt; and it was strongly urged, that a connexion with England could alone bring back that political system which would give to Austria due weight in the general scale of Europe. Prince Kaunitz, however, confined the first transactions of the new reign, to that restricted policy which he had marked out for the Empress-Queen; Joseph lost an important period in petty internal regulations, and was soon characterized by an ardent attachment to trifling arrangements, a jealousy of Prussia, and a subserviency to France. Kaunitz possessed great talents and virtues; but he had formed an erroneous system, and was of a disposition too unbending to recede.

The Emperor joins the armed confederacy.

The partiality of the Emperor for France soon became apparent from the reserve of prince Kaunitz toward the English ambassador, and his vindication of the enemy, if not always on the ground of right, at least on that of expediency. He began also to display a predilection for the northern league, and after a long and affectedly mysterious concealment, avowed the accession of his sovereign to that injurious compact.

A journey which the Emperor made to Paris in the course of the year, seemed totally to have reversed the sentiments he had imbibed in his former expedition ; his partiality was now as conspicuous as his contempt had been outrageous. His admiration of Louis XVI. and satisfaction at events favourable to France, excited surprise at Vienna, and consternation in the British cabinet.^a

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His growing partiality toward France.

State of the public mind.

The perplexities arising from the aspect of foreign affairs were augmented by untoward appearances at home. Although Great Britain had never before made such extensive military efforts ; although no other country had ever conceived the idea of sending and provisioning so great an army across the Atlantic, the war, marked by ill success, had ceased to be popular ; national honour, or the jealous vindication of the rights of sovereignty, were no longer considered equivalent to the enormous expenses, which the arts of opposition had taught the people to regard with peculiar suspicion and malevolence. The authority of Great Britain over the colonies had been so often explained, qualified and partially renounced, that its value was rendered almost insignificant, and the pompous accounts of beneficial commerce with America were generally discredited, since a long protracted suspension of intercourse had produced no alarming effects : but, on the contrary, the strength and resources of the country surpassed expectation, and exposed to ridicule the gloomy forebodings of theoretical financiers. The grant of American independence was therefore contemplated as a moderate medium for the acquisition of peace ; nor was the necessity of yielding to a formidable combination, considered derogatory to the national honour, which had been so gloriously maintained during the struggle. Had it been thought expedient to aim at exciting strenuous sentiments of enthusiasm, the state of the public mind was peculiarly

^a Chiefly from private information and official correspondence.

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uufavourable. Long declamations and verbose complaints of speculative grievances, or unfelt oppressions, had rendered political discussions odious, and public spirit suspected. The people of the metropolis, immersed in luxury, and abandoned to dissipation^b, surveyed with apathy the course of public events; while those in the country received as incontrovertible dogmas the rash speculations of their mock representatives, their delegates, and corresponding committees, who aimed at general reform, and, for the purpose of overthrowing the ministry, did not hesitate to shake the very basis of government.

In the new parliament the minority had gained a considerable increase of adherents, and added to their list several respectable orators, beside acquiring the valuable aid of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Pitt.

The misfortunes of the war rendered the cause of the ministry almost hopeless, their measures inefficient, and generally unpopular, were languidly defended, even by their professed partizans; and assailed by reproach, and dejected by ill success, they met parliament with unusual anxiety and alarm.

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Meeting of
parliament.

In the speech from the throne, the King repeated his resolution to persevere in opposing the combined power of his enemies, till he could obtain terms of pacification consistent with his own honour, and the

^b The state of the British metropolis occasioned at this period severe animadversions against the police. Within sight of the palace, and, in the centre of polite residence, an impudent empiric, under pretext of a medical lecture, detailed every night the most detestable obscenities, which were collected by the underlings of literature, and sent forth to poison the minds of the rising generation, nauseously illustrated with disgusting prostitutions of the graphic art. A destructive mode of adventure called “E. O.” was supposed out of the reach of the law, because not distinctly specified in any statute; and tables were held in almost every street and alley in the metropolis. To these not only men of fortune, but the tradesman, the mechanic, nay even the apprentice and the menial resorted. Some were established in common brothels, and exhibited disgraceful scenes of riot, drunkenness, and debauchery, while plunder, assassination, and suicide abounded. Late in the ensuing session, the attention of the legislature was directed towards these nuisances, and it was stated in the House of Commons, (See Debates, 26th June, 1782,) that in two parishes of Westminster alone, two hundred and ninety-six E. O. tables were maintained. Another member corroborated the assertion, adding, that five hundred more were on the stocks, and that they were now to be found in almost every country town.

permanent interests and security of his people. The restless ambition which first excited the enemy to commence, still prolonged the war, but he could not consent to sacrifice, either to his own desire of peace, or the temporary ease and relief of his subjects, the essential rights and permanent interests of the nation. He mentioned in terms of deep concern the unfortunate events of the campaign in Virginia; but trusted in the protection of Providence, the goodness of his cause, the concurrence and support of parliament, the valour of his forces, and a vigorous, animated, and united exertion of the faculties and resources of the people, for the restoration of a safe and honourable peace to all his dominions.

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Lord Shelburne, who moved an amendment to the address, declared he was not surprised at the language uttered from the throne; it proceeded from a valiant and generous prince, gathering firmness from misfortune, and assuming an air of dignity and resolution, in the moment when calamity pressed on him and his people. Nor was he surprised that ministers, taking advantage of such noble sentiments, had fabricated a speech flattering to the personal feelings of their sovereign; but the situation of the country required them to resist the impulse of their master's sentiments, and honestly impart such advice as would tend to retrieve his affairs. He decried the whole conduct of the war, imputing its disasters to want of system, combination, and intelligence. By uniformly following the French, we had yielded to them every advantage: wherever they dispatched a large force, we tardily pursued with a small one. Such was the case at the Chesapeak, at Jamaica, Barbadoes, and all the West India islands; nay, he expected another Chesapeak at Plymouth, and should not wonder to find a Chesapeak in the river Thames. He decried the war with Holland as a war of perfidy. From the cautious concealment of the measure, he expected some great achievement to compensate for the loss of reputation

Debates on
the ad-
dresses.

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 XLII. against the spice islands, Ceylon, or some other im-
 1781. portant place, St. Eustatia alone was captured, and
 he solemnly believed the surrender of Lord Corn-
 wallis's army had been occasioned by the manner in
 which the general and admiral had disposed of the
 stores. In conclusion, he quoted an observation of
 the late Lord Chatham ; "If the present system is
 pursued, I will not say that His Majesty will lose the
 crown, but his affairs will be precipitated into such
 a state of ruin, distraction, and calamity, that his
 crown will be scarcely worth his wearing."

The Duke of Richmond, coinciding in Lord Shel-
 burn's sentiments, carried his censures still further ;
 the calamities of the reign, he said, should be attributed
 not to ambition in the enemies, but folly in the mi-
 nisters of the crown. He vehemently decried the re-
 presentation of the people, and affirmed that the
 country was governed by clerks, each minister con-
 fining himself to his own office, and consequently,
 instead of responsibility, union of opinion, and con-
 cerned measures, nothing was displayed but dissen-
 sion, weakness and corruption. All these faults in
 government originated in the interior cabinet, and
 as a proof that such an influence existed, he quoted
 Lord Chatham's declaration, that "when he entered
 the King's closet, he found the ground rotten, and
 himself duped and deceived."

The Marquis of Rockingham drew a comparison
 between the King's accession and the present period.
 On the death of that great and good Prince George
 II. he said, triumph and success attended our arms in
 every quarter of the globe : a Pitt directed the poli-
 tical machine, a Newcastle the finances, a Legge pre-
 sided over the exchequer, and an Anson over the
 navy ; forming not only an able and upright, but,
 which was far more important in this country, a po-
 pular administration. These men had been compelled
 one by one to retire, and from that period every thing

was conducted by favouritism and secret influence. Secret influence, and lust of unconstitutional power, had given birth to an attempt at rendering America as servile and devoted as England had proved herself. This had occasioned and prolonged the war, and the assertion in the King's speech, that it originated in the restless ambition of the enemy, was therefore an arrant falsehood.

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Lord Camden reprobated the conduct of the war, attributing its miscarriages principally to the deranged state of the navy, to irresolution and want of vigour in the cabinet, and above all to the fatal error of continuing to bend our principal efforts against America. The subjugation of the colonies should now be rendered a secondary object ; and all our exertions employed in restoring the navy to its pristine respect, effective strength, and wonted superiority. Though late, the experiment was worth making, and, if foiled, we must submit to Providence. In the last war, we retained the choice of attack, and confounded our enemies, who knew not where or how to defend themselves ; panic and despair succeeded confusion, and victory was ours on every side.

The measures of government were specifically defended by Lord Stormont and the Earl of Hillsborough, but their arguments were not proportioned to the vigour of the attack : and the lord chancellor, while he passed the highest encomiums on the judgment and eloquence of Lord Camden, resisted the amendment, principally as it was contrary to the established forms of parliament. It was rejected by a considerable majority ^c, and no more than three peers subscribed a short protest.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Fox moved an amendment similar to that of Lord Shelburne. He sarcastically applauded the ministry for engaging very young members to move and second the address ^d ; a

^c 75 to 31.

^d Mr. Percival and Mr. Thomas Orde.

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XLII. recommendation of ignorance. Though himself a
1781. young man, he could not be called a young member; he had seen the whole system of ministers, their progressive madness, impolicy, or treachery: but their audacity in bringing such a speech to the House, and moving such an address was to him a subject of astonishment, nay of horror. Men unacquainted with the British constitution, and ignorant that the speech was contrived by a cabinet council, would pronounce it that of an arbitrary, despotic, hard-hearted and unfeeling monarch; who, having involved the slaves his subjects in a ruinous and unnatural war, to glut his enmity, or satiate his revenge, was determined to persevere in spite of calamity and even of fate. The general expectation was, that the King would have avowed with regret, his having been deluded, and requested the assistance of parliament in restoring peace, security, and happiness; but instead of this, they had heard a speech, breathing vengeance, blood, misery, and rancour.

The mover of the address had observed, that there were members of parliament so lost to duty, honour, and shame, as to express warm wishes for the success of the enemy, to glory in their conquests, and boast of the countenance they had given to rebellion; to such men must the calamities of the country be attributed. In reply to this observation, Mr. Fox quoted Lord Chatham, who, at the very commencement of the dispute, "thanked God that America resisted the claims of the mother country." "But all the calamities of the country," he continued, "are ascribed to the wishes, the joy, and the speeches of opposition. O miserable and unfortunate ministry! O blind and incapable men! whose measures are framed with so little foresight, and executed with so little firmness, that they crumble to pieces and bring ruin on the country, merely because one rash, weak, or wicked man in the House of Commons makes a speech against

them ! What despicable statesmen, who frame their C H A P. measures in so feeble and wretched a manner as to make no provision for the contingencies of fortune, nor for the rash or even wicked passions of individuals ! Could they expect there would be no rash, no weak, no wicked men in the kingdom, or were they so rash, so weak, and so wicked, as to contrive measures of such a texture, that the intervention of any unforeseen circumstance brokethem to pieces and destroyed the empire." Retrospective censures were deprecated, but ministers must bear to hear them ; they must hear them on that day when the representatives of the people must recal to their ears the disgraceful and ruinous measures which had brought the kingdom to its present state. They must not only hear them in parliament, but he trusted, through the indignation and vengeance of an injured and undone people, they would hear of them at the tribunal of justice, and expiate them on the public scaffold. The day was approaching, it was at hand, when the people would no longer submit, nor the ministry escape. He would not say he believed they were in the pay of France ; it was not possible for him to provethe fact ; but they had served the *grand monarque* more faithfully and more successfully than ever ministers served a master. If the French king had exhausted his exchequer and drained his resources for their emolument, he cheaply purchased the aggrandizement of his kingdom ; they had promoted the French aim of universal monarchy more than all the preceding ministers France had ever employed, nay more than all the achievements of *Louis le Grand*. In support of these assertions, Mr. Fox reviewed the origin and conduct of the war, affirming that the loss of the army in Virginia, and the loss of thirteen provinces, must be solely ascribed to the influence of the crown. All the calamities of the nation were connected with the system and with the men in power. By changing the one *in toto*, and removing the others, the fountain-

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Several other members in opposition spoke in reproachful terms of the condition of the navy, and the general system of government. Mr. Thomas Pitt did not hesitate to affirm, "that there was no public, no parliament, nor could government be conducted without bringing to an account those who had reduced the nation to its present disgraceful situation." He did not desire a change of ministry ; no matter what puppets worked the dismal scene ! Whether one low little set of men, on one or on the other side of the House, while the secret poisoning influence remained, which had begun with and continued through the whole reign. He hoped to God the ministry would not be displaced till they had brought the affairs of the nation to such a crisis, as would draw on them a suitable reward. He favoured the amendment, but if it were carried would not vote for the address, not consent to a shilling of supply in support of a war to which the country gentlemen had unfortunately afforded too much countenance.

The reflections on the state of the navy were answered by Lord Mulgrave, who refuted many assertions by contradictory facts, and affirmed, that at no previous period had so ample a marine been provided, a marine which had employed a hundred and eighteen thousand men. In the course of his speech, he advanced the extraordinary assertion, that Great Britain never was equal to France in a naval contest, when that power applied all her resources and strength to the equipment of a navy.^d In the reigns of William III.^e and Queen Anne, France was superior to

^d This expression, somewhat too strongly stated in the parliamentary reports, occasioned some observations in print by Sir John Sinclair, which produced an explanation and vindication of his remarks from the noble lord. See Sinclair's *Thoughts on the Naval Strength of Great Britain*, 2d edition.

^e The views of William on the continent, turned his attention from a naval to a land force ; nearly the same continental politics prevailed during the greater part of the reign of Queen Anne ; therefore Lord Mulgrave's argument cannot by any means be considered as conclusive.

Great Britain and Holland. The present war was C H A P. calamitous but not disgraceful; nor could a period of history be produced, when the honour and spirit of the nation had risen to a more glorious height.

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Lord North, in a short but able speech, answered the philippic of Mr Fox, treating with scorn the insinuation that Ministers received the pay of France; the leader of opposition did not believe it, nor did any man in the House, or in the kingdom. The misfortunes of the nation had been attributed to the misconduct, incapacity, or treachery of ministers; but whatever might be their talents, their zeal in the service of their country was indisputable, and their errors those of the judgment, not the heart. The American war was prosecuted, not with the infamous design of aggrandizing the crown at the expense of the constitution, and making the subjects slaves that the King might be despotic, but with the view of preserving entire and unbroken, the old and venerable constitution of government, composed of King, Lords, and Commons, for which our fathers had bled, and which Europe envied. The Americans had originally no objection to submit to the authority of the crown, but objected to the interference of parliament. They were adverse to the claims of parliament, and not those of the sovereign, and for the preservation of those resisted rights the war was commenced. "A melancholy disaster has occurred in Virginia," he said, "but are we therefore to lie down and die? No: it ought rather to impel, to urge, to animate; for by bold and united exertions every thing may be saved; by dejection and despair, every thing must be lost." He would not be deterred by menaces of impeachment and the scaffold from striving to preserve the rights and legislative authority of parliament. The war had been unfortunate, but, not unjust; it was founded in right, and dictated by necessity; he had always thought so, and should the share he had taken in maintaining the constitution

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lead to the scaffold, his opinions would remain unaltered.

Mr. Burke rose indignant at this speech, which he termed not only imprudent but audacious; it froze his blood and harrowed up his soul. If men were untaught by experience, if neither calamities could make them feel, nor the voice of God make them wise, what had this poor fallen, miserable, undone country to hope? The war was not unfortunate but disgraceful: the former epithet could only apply to occurrences in which fortune alone was concerned; but the present war exhibited neither plan nor foresight. Victories and defeats, towns taken or evacuated, generals appointed or recalled, all were alike, all calamitous. Victory inspired hope, defeat despair; but both instigated us to go on, and both were therefore calamitous. The King's speech, however, was the greatest calamity of all; for that shewed the disposition of ministers, not to retreat an inch, but to plunge deeper, and augment the disgrace and unhappiness of the nation. But who could patiently hear of rights, which had cost us so much, and which were likely to cost us our all? "Good God!" he exclaimed, "are we yet to be told of the rights for which we went to war. Oh, excellent rights! Oh, valuable rights! that have cost Britain thirteen provinces, four islands, a hundred thousand men, and more than seventy millions of money! Oh, wonderful rights! that have lost to Great Britain her empire on the ocean, her boasted, grand, and substantial superiority, which made the world bend before her! Oh, inestimable rights! that have taken from us our rank among nations, our importance abroad, and our happiness at home; that have deprived us of our trade and manufactures; reduced us from the most flourishing empire in the world, to one of the most compact, unenviable powers on the face of the globe! Oh, wonderful rights! that are likely to take from us all that yet remains! We had a right to tax America; and as we

had a right we must do it. We must risk every thing, forfeit every thing, think of no consequences, take no consideration into view but our right, consult no ability, nor measure our right with our power, but must have our right. Oh, miserable and infatuated ministers! Miserable and undone country! not to know that right signifies nothing without might; that the claim without the power of enforcing it, was nugatory and idle in the copyhold of rival states, or of immense bodies. Oh! says a silly man, full of his prerogative of dominion over a few beasts of the field, there is excellent wool on the back of a wolf, and therefore he must be sheared. What! shear a wolf? Yes. But will he comply? have you considered the trouble? how will you get this wool? Oh; I have considered nothing, and I will consider nothing but my right: a wolf is an animal that has wool; all animals that have wool are to be shorn, and therefore I will shear the wolf. This was just the kind of reasoning urged by the minister, and this the counsel he had given."

After a protracted discussion, the amendment was negatived.^f

On bringing up the report of the address, the debate was renewed, and principally distinguished by an eloquent harangue from Mr. William Pitt, who acquired great applause from both sides of the House. He rose to vent those sentiments of indignation which rendered his situation too painful to be endured in silence. Duty to his sovereign and his country impelled him to endeavour at preventing parliament from precipitately pledging the House to prosecute the American war, and persevere in that fatal system which had led a once flourishing and glorious nation, step by step, to a situation the most calamitous and disgraceful; a situation which threatened the final dissolution of the empire. He was unable to account for the confidence of ministers in proposing an address which pledged

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parliament to measures, of which not even a plan or outline was submitted to their consideration. What could occasion so stedfast an adherence to the American war? Was there any national object in pursuit? Certainly none! In real truth, the object of contest was an appendage to the office of first lord of the treasury, too dear to be relinquished; it was the grand pillar, built on the ruins of the constitution, by which he held his situation; the great means of extending the influence of the crown, on which alone he placed his security! But how could ministers expect the confidence of Parliament, who had among themselves no bond of union? "I am satisfied in my soul," he exclaimed, "that were I to go from one end of the treasury bench to the other, and ask every man there, if he could trust his neighbour, they would all answer in the negative; and yet they expect from Parliament that confidence which they have not in each other."

Mr. Pitt then analyzed the different reasons assigned on the preceding day for continuing the war. Lord North had argued that the war was just and necessary. As to its justice, no discussion was necessary; the whole universe had heard and seen enough to decide on that head; the term necessity, as applied to its prolongation, was not easily understood; it could mean nothing short of physical necessity; and to say that an end could not be put to the war, if Parliament were so resolved, was an absurdity too gross for animadversion. Lord George Germaine had rested all his hope on the more mild, lenient, and moderate expectation of the practicability of dispatching a sufficient force to enable the numerous friends of Great Britain to conquer their opponents. To appreciate the wisdom of this conceit, Mr. Pitt recommended a retrospect of the war; the events of the last campaign, and above all the tenth article of Lord Cornwallis's capitulation, where all the friends of Great Britain, all the loyalists who had been treacherously deluded to join the army, were left to the civil justice of their country. He

could not define what was the civil justice of America; but if the same treacherous system which had long disgraced Great Britain were persevered in, civil justice might overtake those who were more proper objects of its operation, than the unfortunate wretches who had sacrificed their lives and fortunes to the empty promises of an abandoned administration.

Mr. Burke also returned to the charge, adverting to Lord Cornwallis's surrender, and to the horrible spectacle which must meet the eyes of a prince of the blood^s, who could not sail along the American coast, without beholding the faithful adherents of his father hanging in quarters on every head-land. The blood of all the Americans who had lost their lives in consequence of that capitulation, rested on the head of Lord Cornwallis or the ministry; and he would make those walls re-echo with it till the noble earl, for whose virtues he had the highest regard, accounted for a conduct so disgraceful to the British name, so disgraceful to humanity. He compared the surrender of York Town with that of Saratoga, and branded the ministers as the cause of those disasters, and the address as the most hypocritical, infamous, abandoned, and lying paper, the House had ever been called on to vote.

Mr. Courtenay mentioned with indignation the invidious comparison between two unsuccessful generals. Lord Cornwallis had fallen not ignobly, by the united arms of France and America: he had not fallen in the pride of presumption by the *posse comitatus*; but admired and respected even by the enemy. "His claims," the generous orator exclaimed, "are wreathed with laurels; he is an honour to his profession, who will add lustre to the highest dignities that can be conferred on him; and the sacred and applauding voice of the people will sanctify the choice of a discerning Sovereign."

* Prince William Henry, now Duke of Clarence, who then served in a subordinate station in the fleet.

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Debates on
the capture
of St.
Eustatia.
4th Dec.

The report was received.^h

Lord Cornwallis was not alone exposed to animadversion; Sir George Rodney and General Vaughan received early notice from Mr. Burke, that he should demand copies of their instructions for proceedings at St. Eustatia; and both professing themselves ready to meet the inquiry, he made his motion. His speech was a series of sarcastic reflections on the commanders, whom he represented as cowardly and cruel in their meditated attack on St. Vincent's, and wanton and rapacious plunderers of the inhabitants of St. Eustatia. He displayed the absurdity of selling the stores in such a manner as to furnish the enemy with supplies which they could no otherwise have obtained; and accused the admiral of promoting their successes, by lingering on the spot to which his interest fixed him, while the French fleet was reinforced, and Tobago taken. He hoped the two commanders would not rest contented with self-approbation, and the support of friends: a man might say

— *Populus me sibilat at mihi plundo,
Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplor in arcâ;*

but justice and the public would require something more. He should persevere in urging inquiry: the character of accuser was odious only when the object of inculpation was weak, oppressed, or indigent; but it was not odious to prosecute guilt in stars and ribbonsⁱ, guilt rewarded and countenanced by the official and the opulent.

The admiral said, he appeared before St. Eustatia, for the purpose of cutting off supplies from the enemy, and with the fixed determination not to grant any terms to the inhabitants, who, though nominally friends to England, had been the allies of the enemy. Many residents, who called themselves Englishmen, were not ashamed to supply warlike stores for the de-

^h 131 to 54.

ⁱ Rodney had received the Order of the Bath in November 1780.

struction of their country ; and as he considered such men undeserving of favour, he determined to shew them none. Far from suffering stores to be conveyed to the enemy's islands, directly or circuitously, he had ordered them all to His Majesty's dépôts at Antigua ; and, to insure obedience, had deprived the ships destined to convey them of their provisions, save a bare sufficiency for the voyage. Instead of remaining inactive as had been insinuated, he had planned two expeditions, one against Curaçoa, the other against Surinam, when he received advice that a French fleet of ten or twelve sail, with about seventy transports, was sailing for Martinique, and dispatched Sir Samuel Hood with fifteen sail to encounter them. His intention afterward to fight de Grasse was disconcerted by intelligence conveyed to the French admiral ; and he detailed facts which fully shewed him exempt from blame in not succouring Tobago, or preventing the catastrophe in Virginia.

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General Vaughan, protesting on his honour that he was not directly or indirectly one shilling enriched by the capture of St. Eustatia, asserted that he had treated the enemy with the utmost lenity ; the Jews, who were selected as peculiar objects of commiserative complaint, had been shipped at their own desire for St. Thomas's ; but when the general learned that they had been landed at St. Christopher's, he caused a restitution of their houses and property ; and in testimony of their satisfaction at his conduct, he produced to the House an address from the whole body in synagogue, expressive of their happiness in living under the mild government of George III.* Upon the whole he had acted, to the best of his judgment, for his country's good, and not his own ;

* The expulsion and plunder of the Jews was afterward (4th February 1782) referred to a committee on the petition of Mr. Hohen, and motion of Mr. Burke, and a report presented (14th May) reflecting great discredit on the character of the general and admiral. Actions at law instituted against Rodney were subsequently decided to his disadvantage, and he was forced to refund large sums for property illegally, though not undeservedly seized.

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opposed.
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Motions
against the
war by Sir
James Low-
ther.

and as he was neither a lawyer nor a merchant, he should not again in similar circumstances act differently. The motion was negatived.¹

In debating the army estimates, the grand principle of the war came again under discussion, opposition at first adopting the unprecedented measure of opposing the supply *in toto*. On the failure of this wild attempt^m, Sir James Lowther interrupted the order of the day for the army estimates, by moving a resolution, “that the war carried on in North America had been ineffectual either in protecting the King’s subjects, or defeating the dangerous designs of his enemies.” If this proposition was assented to, he promised to follow it with another, “that all further attempts to reduce the revolted colonies were repugnant to the true interests of the kingdom, as tending to weaken its efforts against its ancient and powerful enemies.”

Mr. Powys seconded the motion in a long and able speech, displaying the illusory and fallacious nature of every hope to subjugate America, and describing the declining state of the nation, and the ill-timed inflexibility of government, by parallels, in the glowing language of Gibbon, from the reigns of the Roman Emperors Valentinian III. and Honorius. He exhorted the House to consider the nature of the war, which was not waged between rival states for a barrier or boundary, but so constituted that every conclusion must be unfavourable to Great Britain. The whole war had been conducted in delusion; every promise broken, every assertion falsified, every object relinquished. It was now a war of revenue, now of supremacy; now a war of coercion, then of friendship; and thus the people, the House, and particularly the country gentlemen, had been deluded, confounded, abused, and cheated. Evasion led but to evasion; trick to trick; repeated losses had converted

¹ 163 to 89.

^m It was over-ruled by 172 to 77.

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firmness into obstinacy, and an attachment to ancient principles of party would now be evidence of frenzy. It was no longer time for men to group together, or indulge in narrow-minded distinctions, when every honest heart and hand in the kingdom should level the pitiful boundaries of separation, and unite to avert the wreck with which this unhappy nation was so imminently threatened. The country gentlemen, long deceived, could be deluded no more. No idea of American revenue remained, no idea of alleviating the burdens of Britain by carrying on the war; there was no other idea, and could be no other motive, than to preserve the power, the consequence, and the emoluments that flowed from it. No inconvenience could result from declaring, that the continent of America should no longer be the theatre of war; on the contrary the European enemies of Great Britain would become alarmed for their numerous possessions, and a general consternation would spread among them for the safety of their wide-extended dominions.

Lord North acknowledged the motions to be fair, moderate, free from passion, not founded in personal resentment, and as to style perfectly unexceptionable; but refused to concur in them, chiefly because they formed a parliamentary advertisement to the enemy of the manner in which the next campaign would be conducted; and moved the order of the day. He avowed, however, his opinion, "*that it would neither be wise nor right to prosecute the war in America any longer on a continental plan, that is, by sending fresh armies to march through the colonies, in order by those marches to subdue America to obedience.*" Even this acknowledgment he would have withheld, but it was plainly legible in the estimates, the moderation of which shewed, that government had no intention of substituting an army for that of Lord Cornwallis. Posts must be maintained and defended in case of attack, and the British commerce must be protected against American cruisers; but

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Sir James Lowther's motions would prevent the accomplishment of all these objects.

Lord George Germaine coincided in opinion with Lord North, but declared, that whenever the House adopted a motion which amounted to a dereliction of America, he would retire; for in his opinion the moment American independence was acknowledged, the British empire was ruined. Mr. Dunning, though he acquiesced in Sir James Lowther's motions, asserted the same sentiment, adding, with uncommon warmth, that the proposition to declare America independent, was little short of high treason.ⁿ

Many conspicuous members on both sides addressed the chair, but the motion for the order of the day was at length carried by a majority of forty-one only^p, twenty of the usual supporters of administration having joined the opposing party.^q

14th Dec.
Debate
renewed.

This debate was renewed in the next sitting of the House, and was chiefly distinguished by an eloquent speech from Mr. Pitt, tending to prove the total disagreement in principle among the members of the cabinet. He described the two parts of Lord North's statement as repugnant to each other; he first said it was resolved no longer to prosecute the war on a continental plan, and then, as if shocked at having uttered any thing which seemed satisfactory, or which could be understood, startled at the sound of his own words, and apprehensive he had dropped an expression by which he might be bound, he added explanatory expressions which defeated the meaning of his original declaration. Lord North said, the war was no longer to be conducted on its original plan, or with an intention of subduing America by force; Lord George Germaine, that all the ministers were agreed in not abandoning the objects of the war. "The secretary for America," he continued, "is of opinion that

ⁿ Annual Register, 1762, p. 146.

^p 230 to 179.

^q Annual Register, ubi sup.

Great Britain will be ruined if the independence of C H A P. that country is granted, but he gives it only as his own judgment, without knowing the opinions of others! Is it to be credited that a ministry, ignorant of each others opinions, are unanimous! The absurdity is too monstrous to be received, especially at a moment when they are more palpably disunited than ever.” From a comparison of their speeches, he strengthened his assertion of their disunion, and averred that one or both had the meanness to continue in office, and stand responsible for measures which they disapproved. He vehemently invoked the House to extricate themselves from the disgrace of being subservient to the despicable views of such men. In only one thing they were agreed, and that was, in their resolution to destroy the empire they were called upon to save; and this he feared they would accomplish, before the indignation of a great and suffering people should fall on their heads in merited punishment. “ And God grant,” he added, “ that that punishment be not so long delayed, as to involve a great and innocent family, who, though they can have had no share in the guilt, may, and most likely will, suffer the consequences.”

Sir George Savile ridiculed the address, and compared the crown and parliament to dancers of a minuet to a tune of the minister’s composing. The crown led off one way, the parliament in a similar step to the opposite corner; they then joined hands, and the dance terminated as it began. If ministers were to put into the King’s mouth the line “ What beauties does Flora disclose,” the House would echo “ How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed.” In a more serious tone, he insisted that the address, though demanded as merely complimentary, was intended to be combined with other measures, and ultimately to delude parliament into a continuance of the American war. He compared ministers to the Spartan, who in a sea-engagement swam to a galley and seized

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Although this debate was long and vehement, yet as the aim of the motion was to delay the supplies, the division was less favourable to opposition than that of the preceding day.⁹

An attempt made by the Marquis of Rockingham to prevent the third reading of the malt and land-tax bills till after the recess, was also rejected, though well supported by the mover, and productive of a long debate.

No other transaction in either House, previous to the recess, claimed particular notice, except a motion by Mr. Burke, on the subject of Mr. Laurens, who was still detained in the tower. He painted the ill treatment of this prisoner in glowing colours, and made many sarcastic contrasts between his conduct, character, and pretensions, and those of his supposed oppressors ; narrating the efforts used for effecting his liberation by means of an exchange of prisoners, and reading to the House a correspondence which had passed between himself and Dr. Franklin on the subject. Lord George Germaine refuted the charge of cruel treatment in the most satisfactory manner, by a letter from Mr. Laurens written early in his confinement, thanking ministers for the indulgencies he received. A petition from him was afterward presented complaining, in vague and general terms, of his

19th Dec.
Supplies
opposed in
the lords.

3d and
17th Dec.
Debates on
the treat-
ment of
Laurens.

20th.

rigorous confinement, and praying relief. Mr. Burke C.H.A.P. declared his intention to move for a bill regulating the exchange of prisoners, and amending the act suspending the habeas corpus ; but it was rendered unnecessary by the discharge of Mr. Laurens.

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He is dis-
charged.
Recess.

Although the adjournment of parliament was as usual strenuously resisted, it was a measure beneficial to opposition. The fabric of administration was visibly tottering ; the country gentlemen had shewn a disposition to desert the ministry, although they would not impede the exertions of government. The opinion that divisions fatal to forcible exertion prevailed in the cabinet, daily gained additional credence ; and the people saw with impatience the protraction of an expensive war, the measures of which seemed to be blasted in their very commencement.

The rage for public meetings, clubs, and committees of delegates, still continued, and projects of reform, and petitions, were generally agitated. Before the adjournment of parliament, a common hall of the city of London voted an address, remonstrance, and petition to the King, reprobating his speech from the throne, and the conduct of ministers, recapitulating the disasters of the war, and their effects, declaring their abhorrence of it as an unnatural and unfortunate contest, and requiring the dismission of all the King's advisers both public and secret.^s A similar address was voted by the electors of Westminster, whom Mr. Fox convened in Westminster-hall, and whom he addressed in a long harangue formed on the popular model, that of comparing the sentiments and conduct of Lord Chatham with the present administration. The freeholders of Middlesex and Surry, the West India planters, and many other bodies, adopted the same measure, with only slight variations as to terms.

Proceeding
in public
meetings.
6th Dec.
London pe-
tition for
peace and
change of
ministry.11th Dec.
Other peti-
tions.

Yet the principle of the war was not unpopular :

^s On the presentation of this paper, attempts were made to revive the old contest, respecting the King's receiving it on the throne, and a common hall passed a resolution on the subject. See Annual Register, 1782, p. 195.

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the public burthens, and the general failure of success, occasioned great irritability in the nation ; but any appearance of vigour, or any important success obtained by the arms of Britain, would have reconciled to its continuance many of those who were now most clamorous for peace.

Kempen-
felt's unsuc-
cessful expe-
dition.

But although the ministry had adopted wise and vigorous plans for restoring the preponderance of the British arms, the aspect of affairs at the close of 1781, and during the first months of the ensuing year, was highly discouraging and unprosperous. Intelligence having been received of the equipment and destination of a fleet from Brest, to reinforce and supply the East and West India squadrons, Admiral Kempenfelt was dispatched to intercept it, with twelve sail of the line, one ship of fifty guns, and four frigates. The information received by government was correct in every particular, except the force of the enemy ; the British admiral met them at the distance of fifty leagues from Ushant, and as they were scattered by a storm, succeeded in taking twenty transports laden with ordnance, stores, and provisions, and conveying nearly eleven hundred troops, and five hundred and forty-eight seamen. Perceiving the enemy forming the line of battle, Kempenfelt prepared for the encounter ; but discovering, on a nearer approach, that their force amounted to nineteen sail of the line, some of which were of the largest dimension, two ships armed en flute, and a great proportion of frigates, he reluctantly declined hazarding an attack, and returned to England. The value and quality of the prizes proved the importance of the expedition, and added to the disappointment of the public ; the ministry were loud censured for their deficiency in information, or negligence of duty, and before the recess, the House of Commons had already resounded with the complaints of opposition.

Subsequent events, the intelligence of which arrived during the renewed session of parliament, and

Capture of
St. Christo-
pher's,

influenced its proceedings, were equally unfavourable to administration. The Marquis de Bouillé, after recapturing St. Eustatia, and preparing for the reconquest of Demarary and Issequibo, proceeded to the attack of St. Christopher's, where he landed eight thousand men, protected by de Grasse's fleet of thirty-two sail of the line. Basseterre, the capital of the island, built of wood, and destitute of means of defence, separately capitulated, and the French fleet anchored in the road, while the troops and militia, amounting to nine hundred and fifty men, under General Fraser and governor Shirley, repaired to Brimstone hill, an unassailable eminence, but requiring a much more numerous garrison, and extremely deficient in stores and artillery. The French general was however reduced to the necessity of besieging the hill in form, and his followers, with vast labour and difficulty, conveyed the requisite artillery, and opened the trenches. Meanwhile Sir Samuel Hood, with only twenty-two ships of the line, quitted Barbadoes, resolved to hazard an engagement with the superior force of France, for the protection of so valuable an island as St. Christopher's. As soon as he had formed his line of battle, de Grasse, desirous to gain room for advantageous action, quitted his anchorage, and stood out to sea; the British admiral, with masterly judgment and presence of mind, lured him still further from the shore, and then placed his own fleet in the situation which his opponent had quitted. De Grasse, after ineffectual efforts to cut off the rear of the British squadron, and two resolute attempts on the whole line while at anchor, had the mortification to witness the complete interception of all communication between himself and the army.

The French general, however, continued the siege of Brimstone hill with unremitting vigour, and prevented all correspondence between the British fleet and the garrison. Yet the critical state of his enterprise inspired alarm; Sir George Rodney was daily

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expected with reinforcements from England, and de Bouillé, having lost near a thousand men during the siege, accelerated the surrender by threatening to burn the plantations, and renew the devastation which he had committed at Tobago. The militia in the garrison were too much interested in this menace not to press their commanders to capitulate ; and the French general acceded to every requisition they made, respecting either public or private property, the garrison, or the inhabitants at large. General Fraser and governor Shirley were exempted from the terms imposed on prisoners of war ; the former being allowed to rejoin his regiment, and the latter to resume his government at Antigua.

Admiral Hood had seen the French destroy the batteries at Basseterre ; their proceedings indicated despair, and his hopes were raised to the most sanguine pitch ; he was proportionately irritated, when the surrender was made without consulting him ; but he secured the safety of his squadron by slipping all his cables at the same moment in the night, and getting under weigh so silently, that the enemy's fleet offered neither obstruction nor pursuit. The small islands of Nevis and Montserrat being also reduced, Barbadoes and Antigua were the only leeward islands remaining in the possession of Great Britain.

Nevis and
Montserrat.

Capture of
Minorca.

The capture of Minorca occasioned no less dissatisfaction than the loss of the West India islands. Fort St. Philip's was garrisoned by two thousand six hundred and ninety-two men, including four hundred invalid sailors, a marine corps, and a few Greeks and Corsicans ; the ditch and subterranean defences were cut out of the living rock, and exceedingly strong, but the upper works were not proportionately calculated for resistance, and the garrison did not exceed a moiety of the requisite number. The besieging force consisted of sixteen thousand regular troops, with a hundred and nine pieces of the heaviest cannon, and thirty six great mortars ; yet the Duc de Crillon,

who commanded the expedition, did not blush to attempt corrupting the governor's integrity by the proffer of a bribe. General Murray answered the detestable proposal in terms of indignant reproof, reminding the tempter of the regard due to the honour of his own family, which was not, however, more illustrious than that of the general. The progress of the siege was more honourable to de Crillon than its outset. By a judicious disposition of his force, he cut off all supply from the country, and by a well-directed and incessant cannonade and bombardment, rendered casemates and souterrains the only abodes of safety. Although the care of the British government had supplied all necessaries for subsistence and medicine even to profusion, the garrison, in consequence of the privation of vegetables, were afflicted with the scurvy, which, attended with putrid fevers and dysentery, raged with pestilential virulence. Their zeal produced acts of uncommon heroism ; a well-conducted and spirited sally put them in possession of Cape Mola, de Crillon's headquarters ; their batteries destroyed a powder magazine, and sunk a ship freighted with artillery, bombs, and stores ; but these temporary successes were unavailing, and some unhappy differences between the governor and lieutenant-governor rendered defence still more hopeless. Disease became at length too powerful for the efforts of medicine ; the effective garrison was reduced to six hundred, and even these could not long be kept from the hospital ; the surgeons remonstrated to the governor, that a further delay of capitulation would only occasion an unavailing sacrifice of a few devoted victims, whom an enlarged scene of respiration, and wholesome nutriment, alone could rescue from the jaws of death. The besiegers readily granted honourable terms, and testified heroic regret at the sight of this brave band of invalids, marching through their disproportioned ranks to pile their arms. The indignation expressed by the garrison in this last act of prostration, was re-

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Fox's
motion on
the ill
success of
the navy.

corded with honourable admiration by the enemy, who soon forgot that title, and buried all semblance of hostility in generous cares for the health, and liberal supplies to the necessities of the vanquished.

Before these transactions occurred, the sitting of parliament was resumed, and the operations of opposition commenced by a motion of Mr. Fox, for an enquiry into the ill success of the naval forces. If there remained in the House either nerve, honesty, or independence, Mr. Fox declared he would have required the removal of Lord Sandwich, but such were the evil effects of influence, that the understanding as well as the heart of parliament was poisoned. Opposition had been accused, he said, of causing the continuance in office of the first lord of the admiralty, by their frequent efforts to remove him ; they had also been accused of leaguing with Dr. Franklin, with America, with France, with Spain, and of contributing to the independence of the colonies. Better would it have been for Great Britain, that they had supported America, France, Spain, and Holland, than that they had leagued with administration. Without the uniform aid of such a ministry, in vain would Franklin have been wise, Washington brave, Maurepas, de Sartine, and de Castries, vigilant, crafty, and politic ; in vain might America have been firm, the house of Bourbon full of resources, vigour, and energy ; and in vain might Holland, our ancient ally, have proved a powerful adherent to our enemies. The inquiry for which he moved would resolve itself into two parts ; whether the first lord of the admiralty had the means of procuring a navy equal to the exigencies of the state ; and whether he employed the force he really possessed with wisdom and ability. Mr. Fox then reviewed at length the whole conduct of the navy, since the year 1775, shewing that, in every instance, important expeditions had been neglected, deferred, or improvidently and inadequately undertaken. He dwelt on late transactions with peculiar severity ; Rodney had in-

dulged the country with frequent promises that he would give a good account of the enemy in the West Indies, while all his achievements amounted only to a few drawn battles. He had been employed in the despicable plunder of St. Eustatia, while Tobago was taken, and the admiral could not find leisure to prevent the catastrophe of Lord Cornwallis. But Kempenfelt's expedition was the most abandoned of all ; he was sent with an inferior force to intercept the enemy, while many ships of war were employed in the less important service of preventing the Dutch trade. Providence, our constant friend, threw a few transports into his hands, and dispersed others in a storm, and the admiral returned to port, instead of remaining to harass the French fleet, and impede their progress in an united compact body. Parliament had too long acted from their hopes, but must now yield to their judgment, and no longer sport with the feelings of a great, suffering nation, nor presume to ruin a people for the sake of an individual.

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Captain John Luttrell explained several points in which the public had been misled and deceived. Lord Hawke, he said, had not left the navy in so flourishing a situation as was represented ; neither was he in fault, his efforts having been cramped by the parsimony of parliament. During Lord Sandwich's administration, large and liberal supplies had been granted, and were faithfully applied, for never, since England had a navy, were the yards so full of timber and stores. Yet he would not contend that no mismanagement existed ; there were abundant errors in the conduct of the navy, the first remedy for which would be the restoration of harmony, confidence and unanimity. Of old, when an Anson, a Hawke, a Boscowen, a Saunders, and a Keppel commanded, all was cordiality, affection, and zeal ; the admirals took pride in instructing their inferiors, the road to improvement was open for all, and the differences of individuals were accommodated by the intervention of their superiors. Now all was party,

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disunion and jealousy ; officers no longer had access to the tables of their superiors ; they never met but on duty, and consequently had no confidence in each other. For this there was no remedy but calling into service those veterans whose gallantry, skill, and experience were generally acknowledged ; as the present commanders of fleets were, with a few exceptions, but young captains at the termination of last war. He censured the inquiry as an impolitic measure, calculated only to keep alive the dissensions in the navy, and to delude parliament by the production of collusive witnesses, who would, as formerly, laugh in the lobby at their own successful impostures.

Lord Mulgrave defended the general conduct of the naval war ; and Mr. Fitzherbert imputed the deficiency of the navy to the want of shipwrights. The French had three thousand of these artificers at Brest, while the King's yard at Portsmouth contained only eight hundred. Thus the English ships were slowly built ; and while materials abounded, labourers could not be procured. The causes of this defect were the low prices, and the small wages afforded in the royal yards, compared with those of private ship-builders.

Lord North declared, that Lord Sandwich was no less desirous than himself of a full and fair investigation ; and the motion passed without a division, Captain Luttrell interposing his single negative. Several animated debates were maintained respecting the papers to be demanded from the admiralty, in which Mr. Pitt displayed his wonted eloquence, with a surprising facility in the arrangement of business. All the documents required were furnished, and at the first discussion of the committee, a call of the House was ordered.

7th Feb.

After the papers had been read, Mr. Fox, in a long and eloquent speech, renewed the charges against Lord Sandwich, and concluded by moving, that “ during the year 1781, naval affairs had been

grossly mismanaged." After an animated debate, the vote of the committee, though favourable, was by no means flattering to government, as an attendance of three hundred and thirty-eight members produced in their favour a majority of twenty-two only.^t

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Personal
motions in
both Houses.

The defection of the country gentlemen from the cause of administration now inspired opposition with the most sanguine hopes, and questions affecting the conduct of administration ; and the characters of individuals connected with them, were brought forward with diligence, and debated with increasing acrimony. The Duke of Richmond, in making a motion respecting the execution of Colonel Haynes, animadverted with great severity on the conduct of Lord Rawdon and Lieutenant-Colonel Balfour, respecting which, however, he afterwards made satisfactory explanations. The Duke of Chandos demanded an inquiry into the causes of the surrender at York Town, and copies of the ministerial correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton in the year 1781 ; both which propositions were, after violent debates, agreed to, but no consequences resulted.

31st Jan.
and 4th Feb.
The Duke of
Richmond's
respecting
Colonel
Haynes.

7th, 11th
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papers re-
specting
America.

Lord George Germaine, disagreeing with the other members of the cabinet on the future conduct of the war, resigned his office of secretary of state for America, which was bestowed on Mr. Welbore Ellis, and was raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Viscount Sackville. On the report that this mark of royal favour was intended, the Marquis of Carmarthen, not prevented by the consideration of the severe prosecution of his ancestor, the Earl of Danby, moved, that " it was derogatory to the honour of the House of Lords, that any person labouring under so heavy a sentence of a court-martial, and the consequent public orders, should be recommended to the crown as worthy the dignity of peerage." The lord chancellor declared this motion irregular and dis-

Resignation
of Lord
George
Germaine.

11th Feb.
9th Feb.
His peerage.
7th Feb.
Motions re-
specting it.

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orderly, and incompatible with parliamentary form ; and Lord Denbigh objected to it as unprecedented. When the court-martial thus improperly alluded to was held, a particular complexion of politics prevailed in the cabinet ; but only four years afterward, the Rockingham administration, most of the members of which were now in opposition, had desired the restoration of Lord George Germaine to his seat in the privy council, a proof that they considered his advice of great importance to the state. Conceiving the motion derogatory to the prerogative of the crown, and altogether unnecessary, he moved to adjourn. Several intemperate speeches were made, reflecting on the conduct of Lord George, and threatening him with impeachment ; the right of the House to interfere was maintained by Lord Shelburne ; but the motion of adjournment was carried.^u

18th Feb.

When Lord Sackville took his seat, the debate was renewed on a motion by the Marquis of Carmarthen in nearly the same words as the former, and reciting at length the sentence of the court-martial, and the consequent public orders. The marquis considered these sufficiently notorious to render specific proofs unnecessary. Lord Abingdon supported the motion in a speech replete with ribaldry, declaring that the new peer was foisted in upon the House, in defiance of common sense and common decency, in contempt of public virtue, and encouragement of every private vice.

Lord Sackville declared he knew not to whose advice he was indebted for his peerage ; but as the sentence of a court-martial did not amount to a disqualification, he was authorized to accept it. The court-martial, he proceeded, sat three-and-twenty years ago, when the prevalence of faction and clamour made him the victim of unexampled persecution. He had been condemned unheard, and

punished before trial. Although stripped of all his C H A P. military honours and emoluments on mere rumour, on the malicious suggestions of his enemies, who were believed, without proof, he had challenged his accusers, he had provoked inquiry, and in the pride of conscious innocence, persevered in demanding a trial. Clamour and prejudice had been assiduously encouraged during the sitting of the court-martial; but it would not become him to revise its proceedings, and he had submitted to the sentence. He did not, however, object to a review of the transaction; on the contrary, he would risk his honour and his life on the decision of the House, or even of the marquis himself, as a man of honour. At present, neither the charge, the defence, nor the evidence was before the House, and yet they were called on to enforce the sentence a second time. Such a proceeding would add tenfold severity to the military law, by annexing to its judgements the censure of a civil court. But it was still more incompatible with justice, to combine with the sentence of the court-martial, the comment added by the executive power. The court-martial was competent to pronounce, and by that he had been tried; nor was he answerable for the terms in which George II. had descended on the sentence.

Lord Southampton, who was one of the witnesses on the trial, declared he was not actuated by faction; and the Duke of Richmond, who was at the battle of Minden, though not examined as a witness on the court-martial, asserted that the time lost by Lord George Germaine was an hour and an half, a fact he was particularly able to ascertain, "as he had his watch in his hand the whole time."

Lord Sackville was defended by Lord Walsingham and Lord Stormont; and the lord chancellor declared, that whoever had advised the late King to issue the orders mentioned in the motion, advised him to act most unjustly, and to publish a stigma on

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the noble lord, more severe than could be collected from the sentence, or even from the charge against him. The proposition being negatived by a large majority^x a protest was subscribed by nine peers^y, stating the motion, sentence, and public orders, and declaring that the elevation of Lord Sackville was a measure fatal to the interests and glory of the crown, and dignity of parliament; an insult on the memory of the late sovereign, and every surviving branch of the illustrious House of Brunswick.

The hope of mortifying the new peer by this indecent protest seems to have been the chief object of the motion. Nothing but the extreme vindictiveness of party rage could have impelled the avowed advocates of liberty, to the adoption of arguments favouring the unjust and slavish doctrine, that the opinion of a King on the judgment of a military court, was of sufficient authority to bind his successor, and influence the proceedings of the legislature, twenty years after his decease.

19th Feb.
Censures of
General
Arnold.

As another individual favoured by government, General Arnold was exposed to severe censures. On the commitment of the mutiny bill, Mr. Burke expressed strong disapprobation at employing that officer in the British army, as he was a rebel to rebels. His services might be properly rewarded by a pecuniary gift or a pension, but he ought never to be entrusted with the power of committing fresh treasons.

Renewed
motion re-
specting the
navy.
22d Feb.

These personal attacks were preparatory to a grand general system of assault, projected by opposition, conducted with perseverance and ability, and finally crowned with success. Mr. Fox renewed in the House, the motion he had lost in the committee, respecting the mismanagement of the navy, declaring his effort was not personally directed against Lord Sandwich, but against the whole admiralty board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pitt; the number of members

^x 93 to 28.

^y They were, the Marquis of Carmarthen, the Duke of Rutland, the Earls of Pembroke, Craven, Chatham, Derby, and Egremont, the Duke of Devonshire, and Earl of Abingdon.

present at the discussion was considerably greater than on the former day, and the division still less gratifying to administration, as the majority in their favour was only nineteen.²

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General
Conway's
motion
against the
war.

22d.

While the members were in the lobby on this division, Mr. Thomas Townsend gave notice that a question respecting the continuance of the American war would be speedily agitated. Accordingly, on the next sitting of the House, General Conway moved an address, imploring the King to consider the calamities, and heavy burdens occasioned by the war, and listen to the humble prayer and advice of the Commons, that it might no longer be pursued on the continent of North America, for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants by force, and promising to assist in forwarding and rendering effectual a happy reconciliation with the revolted colonies. In the present moment, the General observed, when there were certain indications of a design to continue the war, he thought it necessary to inquire of the new secretary of state, who, though not a young man, was a young minister, what were his principles and sentiments respecting the American war? The King in his speech had expressed a desire for peace, and it was said by persons of good authority, that America was in the same disposition; the House ought to give effect to such desires; for the man who did not wish for peace, not only was destitute of a heart, but did not possess a soul. Lord John Cavendish seconded the motion, with strong censures on the war, and a solemn appeal to the feelings of the House.

Mr. Welbore Ellis, without hesitation, answered the call of general Conway, and presented those opinions which he termed his profession of faith. He had always been firmly of opinion, nor could events change it, that the war was just in its origin; but he never entertained a notion that obedience could be

². 236 to 217.

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procured by force. His idea was, that in America there were many friends to the British government; and that by strongly supporting them, the party or faction might be destroyed, which from motives of ambition, or hatred of monarchy, wished for war. That our friends were still numerous was a fact for which he would not pledge himself to the House, but he firmly, and for the best reasons, believed it. No man could be more sincerely desirous of peace; he could endure war only as the means of making that more happy, stable, safe, and permanent. If a test was required of the views of ministry in continuing the war, it would be best afforded by the estimates, which made no allowance for recruiting the army. But he could never consider as the best way of procuring peace, to withdraw the troops from the enemy's country, and rid him of those alarms by which men are rendered solicitous for the return of tranquillity. Such conduct would be equivalent to a declaration of despair, an offer of a *carte blanche*; but to make the Americans feel the inconveniences, hardships and burdens of war, was the most certain way to inspire a wish for its cessation. He exposed the absurdity of using so vague a term as *American war*; the whole continental army was fed, cloathed and paid by France. Mere locality did not give a name to a war; and this might therefore be considered a French war. If France was fought during the last war in Germany, why not now in America? The motion seemed to imply that the British troops should be withdrawn from America: if the House considered the times ripe for such a declaration, they must make it, but the present motion was replete with ambiguity. Ministers could never act with effect, either in war or peace, unless they possessed the confidence of the House; ministers who could not gain that confidence ought to retire; but till that measure became necessary, they ought to be left to the free excise of their discretion, to avail themselves of all contingencies, and not erip-

pled by orders, which the interest of the public ^{C H A P.}
might compel them to disobey.

Mr. Burke ridiculed this "confession of faith," ^{XLII.}
comparing it with other confessions of the same nature,
intelligible only to those who were gifted with an internal light. A confession more obscure, confused, intricate, and absurd, was perhaps never framed and published for the delusion and calamity of mankind: like other unintelligible confessions, it could be supported only by miracles. The only new idea was, that locality signified nothing in war; and thus a peerage was bestowed on one who had dismembered his country, merely that an American might be converted into a French war. Mr. Burke expatiated on the delusion of this argument, and the ruinous consequences of opposing the arms of France on the continent of America, where our expences were to her's in the proportion of twenty to one. The new plan of Mr. Ellis was in fact no other than the old system of his predecessor. The late secretary, though called by patent to the upper House, was still to be found in effigy in his old seat. The new minister, as his universal legatee, who inherited, on Lord Sackville's political death, all his plans, projects, and measures, nay, his ideas, language, and words. He had succeeded to his hopes, his intelligence, his knowledge of our numerous friends in America, and his ignorance of every thing tending to peace. Mr. Burke exposed from experience at Saratoga and York Town, the folly of relying on American friends, and the absurdity was heightened by considering the manner in which they were abandoned by the last capitulation; nor was he less severe on the requisition of confidence by men still determined to persevere in this mad and impolitic war. He concluded by declaring that no contingencies favourable to Great Britain could arise till a change was made in the system.

Several other members spoke on the question with great ability, principally dilating the arguments

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Altercation
between
Lord North
and Colonel
Barré.

already used: the division afforded to ministry the melancholy majority of a single vote.^a

Anticipating a complete triumph, and conceiving that financial arrangements alone could delay the accession of opposition to office, Mr. Fox, immediately after the division, censured Lord North's delay in opening the budget, and was informed the business was fixed for the twenty-fifth.

Colonel Barré expressed surprise that Lord North could behave in so scandalous and indecent a manner; after having by every oppression scourged the people to the last drop of blood, he wished to scourge from them that also. His conduct was scandalous, indecent, and insulting; he had attained such a pitch, that he seemed to think the House met for no other purpose than that of granting taxes.

Lord North, unusually incensed at this unprovoked and unexpected attack, replied with great warmth; he supposed the large minority of that evening had inflamed the Colonel's courage to such an intemperance of abuse; his language towards him had always been far from decent, but now it was insolent and brutal. The clamour of the House obliged the speaker to interfere, and the minister recovering his wonted good humour, made handsome apologies, both to the House and the individual offended. Colonel Barré, equally sensible of his own intemperance, also apologized. He differed with the noble lord, he said, in politics, and contemned him as a minister; but as a private gentleman sincerely esteemed him. In that character, he should be less disposed to offer uncivil language to him, than to any man living. Such were the effects of intemperate party-rage in a mind endowed with honour, candour, and benevolence.

Although the members of opposition were anxious that the minister should complete the unpopular

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25th Feb.
and 6th
March.
Debates on
the new
taxes.

task of taxation, before he was compelled to abdicate his situation, yet they omitted no endeavour to render his exertions unpopular, and to censure the manner, no less than the occasion of imposing burthens on the public. Mr. Fox, decrying the terms of the loan, and accusing the minister of making corrupt bargains for the purpose of affording *douceurs* to contractors, placemen, and members of parliament, observed that as he had brought the nation to the eve of a bankruptcy, it was of small importance for what particular sum the insolvency should be declared. Mr. Burke, animadverting on the difficulty of proposing taxes, observed with his accustomed felicity of satire, that on looking over the blessed fruits of Lord North's administration, he found the country loaded with ten new taxes—beer, wine, soap, leather, horses, coaches, post-chaises, post-horses, stamps and servants; recollecting that he had omitted sugar in this enumeration, he observed, that since St. Christopher's was lost, and Barbadoes and Jamaica must probably follow, the omission was of small importance, as we should soon have no sugar to tax. “What fresh burden,” he proceeded, “can the noble Lord add to this unhappy nation? We are taxed in riding and in walking, in staying at home and in going abroad, in being masters or in being servants, in drinking wine or in drinking beer; in short in every way possible.” But, viewing the account in a mercantile form, he must acknowledge that for a hundred millions of money, we had purchased a full equivalent in disaster. If we were debtor, by loss, in that sum of money, we were also creditor, by loss, in a hundred thousand men, thirteen continental provinces, besides St. Vincent's, Grenada, Dominica, Tobago, St. Christopher's, Senegal, Pensacola, and Minorca, worth at a moderate computation, four millions and a half annually.

Five days after his first triumphant failure General Conway again appealed to the House on the subject of

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27th Feb.
General
Conway's
second
motion.

the war, by moving, “ that the further prosecution of offensive hostilities, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies to obedience by force, would weaken the efforts of Great Britain against her European enemies, increase the mutual enmity so fatal both to Great Britain and America, and by preventing a happy reconciliation with that country, frustrate the desire expressed by His Majesty of restoring the blessings of peace and tranquillity.” The General’s introductory speech was chiefly composed of answers to the arguments against his former motion. He deprecated every mode of warfare hitherto carried on, and wished only for a war of posts, excluding all exertion, except for self-defence, illustrating this opinion by the sorties of General Elliot from Gibraltar, and General Murray from fort St. Philip. In this debate several of the country gentlemen, and some official adherents, declared their resolution to divide against the minister; and the opposition, confident of a majority, were already clamorous for the question; when Lord North, with some difficulty, obtained a hearing.

If the object of the motion was peace, he observed, the votes on the question would be unanimous; the wish of peace was nearest to his heart; but he was convinced the means hitherto suggested were more likely to retard than accelerate the event. No one had ventured to suggest that the troops should be withdrawn; such a proposition would be generally condemned; and the ministers had already declared they did not intend to replace the captured army. If, however, the House remained unsatisfied with this pledge, and suspected the sincerity, ability, or integrity of the ministers, those sentiments were not to be expressed by the present motion; an address for their removal would be the only proper measure. A minister ought to be like Cæsar’s wife, not only exempt from guilt, but above suspicion. If the confidence of parliament was withdrawn, it would be his duty to resign the seal of office into the hands of his

sovereign and retire. He then explained with great ability the impediments to peace while the connexion between France and America still subsisted. Even the proposition of a truce was replete with difficulty; the existing acts of parliament, the necessity of legislative interference, the confiscation of American property; all these were points requiring the greatest delicacy. He admitted the motion to be constitutional, but recommended a short delay, to convince the House, that ministers were sincere in their intention not to recruit the army in America.

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Mr. Wallace, the attorney-general, proceeded on the same principles, declaring his intention to bring in a bill enabling ministers to treat on the basis of a truce, and moved an adjournment of the debate.

This attempt was combated by several leaders of opposition: Mr. Pitt was particularly severe on the motion of adjournment, and on the ground of Lord North's own declaration, urged the House, by every consideration of duty or prudence, to withdraw confidence from the present administration. "Was there a promise," he asked, "which they had not falsified? Was there a plan in which they agreed? Did any two of them accord in any specific doctrine? No! there was an incessant variation: a shuffling and tricking pervaded their whole conduct, and in them parliament could place no trust."

The division on the motion of adjournment left the minister in a minority of nineteen^b, and the original question was carried without a division. The King having returned an answer conformable to the terms of this address, General Conway, after echoing back the very words in a motion of thanks, made an experiment on the disposition of ministers to resign, by moving, "that the House would consider as enemies to the King and country, all who should advise, or by any means attempt the further prose-

The minister in a minority.
4th Mar.
Second address.

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cution of offensive war, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies by force."

Lord North disappointed the hopes of opposition by declaring, that in pursuance of the address, and of the King's answer, he should use every effort to fulfil their orders, relying on their further instruction if he appeared to misapprehend their intentions. He considered the motion unnecessary, as it only reinforced declarations already sufficiently strong.

Mr. Fox rose in great indignation, to expose the impracticability of a cabinet conforming to the instructions of parliament, if contrary to their own judgment. He thanked God the late resolutions of the House had broken, destroyed, and annihilated that corruption which formed the basis of the present system, a system which must now soon crumble to pieces. Ministers surely could not be so profligate as to proceed after the late intelligence, that Minorca was captured; and that, by the loss of St. Christopher's, Jamaica was become our only remaining West India possession. Where did they mean to stop? When would they confess they had done enough? From his soul he believed, such was their accursed obstinacy, that even when they had lost nine-tenths of the King's dominions, they would not be satisfied till they had mangled and destroyed the last miserable tenth also.

Ministers did not venture to divide the House, but the motion was agreed to.

The efforts of both parties were now visibly directed only to the acquisition or retention of official situation. The attorney-general submitted to a committee of the whole House, his proposition for a peace or truce with America, explaining the difficulties, and suggesting means of removing them. Mr. Fox declared the motion deserving only of contempt; ministers had no wish for peace; nothing but flagellation and correction could drive them to entertain a thought on the subject. If they were sincere, what

The attorney-general's
bill, for
peace.
5th Mar.

made them reject the proffered mediation of Spain ; what made them reject the mediation offered in the course of the preceding year ? He would even inform them, that there were persons in Europe fully empowered to make peace between Great Britain and America, but who would not negotiate with such an administration. Our affairs were so circumstanced that they must lose their places, or their country be undone. He, as a friend to his country, would, if properly authorized, conduct the transaction even as an under *commis* or messenger ; but he desired it to be understood, that he did not mean to connect himself with any of the ministers ; *“from the moment when he should make any terms with one of them, he would rest satisfied to be called the most infamous of mankind : he could not for an instant think of a coalition with men, who in every public and private transaction, as ministers, had shewn themselves void of every principle of honour and honesty : in the hands of such men he would not trust his honour, even for a minute.”*

Lord North explained the manner in which mediations had been offered, and answered Mr. Fox's insinuations against his honour with becoming disdain. He would not, he added, relinquish his office merely because so much eagerness was shewn to drive him out ; but as he had hitherto retained it to prevent confusion, and the introduction of unconstitutional principles into government, he would not resign till commanded by the King, or till the House should, in the clearest manner, indicate the propriety of his withdrawing.

Mr. Fox, in handsome terms explained the expressions he had applied to Lord North as not designed to affect his private character, or the parts of his public conduct relating to pecuniary affairs, which were free from every imputation. He then ridiculed the resolution to remain in office, and was surprised that so few days as had elapsed since he declared his willingness to resign whenever the confidence of

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Lord John
Cavendish's
motion
against the
ministry.

25th.

parliament was withdrawn, should produce such a change in his sentiments. The attorney-general's motion was agreed to without a division.

The next effort to bring this anxious contest for power to a conclusion was made by Lord John Cavendish, who moved a series of resolutions declaratory of the duration, losses, and expenses of the war in which Great Britain was engaged without an ally, and imputing all those misfortunes to the want of foresight and ability in ministers. A long debate produced no novelty of argument or assertion, but its termination was contrary to the hopes of opposition, as the minister had a majority of ten.^c

After the lapse of a week, Sir John Rous renewed the attack on administration, by moving a resolution, “That considering the expense, the loss of thirteen colonies, and other losses incurred by the war, the House could no longer repose confidence in the present ministers.” Lord North was on this occasion strenuously supported, not only by his usual defenders, but by several country gentlemen. His abilities, integrity, and incorruption, were acknowledged on all sides; and if the American war could be justly considered as the cause of all public calamities, neither the origin nor the ill success of that war, it was said, could fairly be attributed to him. Could parliament forget the stamp act, and the declaratory act, not less offensive to the Americans? Had not the whole nation maintained the right of sovereignty over America; and all that was great in England sanctified the idea with their suffrage and authority? Had not Lord Chatham himself declared, that if America should manufacture a stocking, or so much as forge a hob-nail, he would let fall on her the whole weight of British power? Thus had the principle of the war been held by Mr. Grenville in the stamp act, the Marquis of Rockingham in the declaratory act, and by Lord Chatham in his speech on the latter subject. The great

^c The division was on a motion for the order of the day — Ayes 226, Noes 216.

cause of ill success was the countenance given in that House to American rebellion: General Washington's army had been called by opposition *our* army; the cause of the Americans, the cause of liberty; and they had been encouraged to persevere, under a confidence that they had in the British senate a strong favouring party. Encomiums had been lavished on Dr. Franklin and Mr. Laurens; some members would prefer a prison graced with their society, to freedom in company with those who supported the cause of England.^a If the present ministers should retire, could any man venture to surmise what new system would be introduced? Were their probable successors so thoroughly united among themselves as to form any system of government? One was desirous of septennial, another of triennial, a third of annual parliaments. One member of the Upper House recommended a diminution of influence without infringing on the dignity, splendour, or prerogative of the crown; while another of equal character was for abrogating influence even at the expense of prerogative. Lord North, it was observed, whether he retired or was expelled from office, would exhibit to the nation the phenomenon of an ex-minister lending support to government, and not endeavouring to thwart, puzzle, and perplex public measures.

Sir James Marriott contested the assertion that we had lost thirteen colonies; they were not yet, but soon might be lost by eagerness and precipitation. Too much forwardness to embrace peace would only further remove it from our grasp. The wisdom of private life was applicable to public concerns, and surely a good bargain or advantageous purchase was never expected to result from the display of intemperate solicitude. He vindicated the characters of administration, repeating, on his own knowledge, the

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^a Alluding to an expression of Burke, in the debate on the treatment of Laurens.

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observation of the Earl of Bristol, two days before his death,^c that if any but a professional man was fit to preside at the admiralty, it was Lord Sandwich. Sir James, it is said, subjected himself to considerable ridicule by a technical proof of the justice of the war, implying that if representation was necessary to give the right of taxation, the thirteen provinces were represented by the members for the county of Kent, since in their charters they were declared to be part and parcel of the manor of Greenwich.

Lord North, in a most able speech, defended his own character and administration. He did not object to the present motion so much as to that of the preceding week ; it was divested of anger, its terms moderate, and its intent clear and defined. He sincerely wished for peace, and for such an administration as could act with unanimity and effect for the national good. He would be no obstacle to a coalition of parties, for the formation and adjustment of a new cabinet in which he should have no place.

This idea was strenuously enforced by Mr. Dundas, and warmly reprobated by Mr. Pitt, who defined a coalition to be a collection and combination of all the abilities, integrity, and judgment of several parties, and turning the united exertion to the service and salvation of the country. The administration had been one of influence and intrigue; he thanked God it was likely to terminate, but trusted the House would not contaminate its own purpose by suffering the present ministers to manage the appointment of their successors. It was the prerogative of the crown to appoint ministers, neither did it become the House to settle who were to hold places, or adjust and investigate the measures to be pursued.

The motion was rejected by a majority of nine.^t

^c It is to be remembered that the Earl of Bristol was one of Lord Sandwich's greatest opponents. He died in December 1779.

^f 236 to 227.

Mr. Fox gave notice to his party, that a new proposition to the same effect would be speedily proposed; and on the appointed day an unusual number of members, and a great crowd of auditors attended. Lord Surrey presented himself for the purpose of making a motion, which Lord North, after some clamour, was permitted to anticipate, by declaring "That His Majesty's ministers were no more." After some further discussion, occasioned by a profession of doubting Lord North's assertion, he obtained leave to move an adjournment for five days, when Lord Surrey might, if he deemed it necessary, proceed with his motion.

He then made his valedictory address as minister, thanking the House for the kind, the repeated, the essential support he had so long received from the Commons of England, while holding a situation to which he had at all times confessed himself unequal. To that House he owed whatever he had been; his conduct within those walls having recommended him to his sovereign. He thanked them for their partiality on all, their forbearance on many occasions. The mortifications he had lately experienced in the House could not make him forget their general support through a service of many years continuance; the recollection of which he should ever cherish as the principal honour of his life. After dwelling some time on these and similar topics, he said, whatever might be extent of the motion intended by Lord Surrey, no evil could arise from a short delay. He was conscious of his responsibility for the trust which he had so long retained, and should neither endeavour to shelter himself, nor avoid enquiry.

The exultation testified by the opponents of the late administration, called forth the animadversions of Mr. Burke, who employed his eloquence in recommending a more temperate conduct, exhorting his associates to guard against their desires, their self-

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Lord North
declares a
change of
ministry.
19th Mar.

His farewell
speech.

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 XLII. 1782. opinions, their vanity, their avarice, their lust of power, and all the worst passions which disfigure the human mind, and pointing out the vast expectations which their own declarations had entitled the public to form, and the immense difficulties they had bound themselves to achieve.

Many of the former supporters of Lord North shewed, as might be expected, at least coldness toward him in his altered fortune ; yet many bore honourable testimony to his merits, and vindicated their past conduct by honest and unsuspected professions of permanent esteem. Sir John Hussey Delaval paid a manly tribute of this kind ; and Mr. Courtenay, though frequently interrupted by turbulent clamours, pronounced an encomium on Lord North, mixed with severe sarcasms against the triumphant party. He had always supported the late minister, he said, from a persuasion of the rectitude of his intentions, and on that point his conviction had never been shaken. If from untoward circumstances some of his measures had not been crowned with the expected success, his whole conduct had displayed a sincere anxiety for the prosperity of the country. His amiable and engaging disposition had procured him many friends, his unrivalled wit many admirers ; his unassuming manners (though he had held solofty a situation twelve years) had prevented his having any enemies ; his forbearing temper was seldom irritated ; and when he was provoked, his manly warmth did honour to his feelings. “ These panegyrics,” he said, “ cannot be censured as ill-timed at this moment,

When interest calls off all her sneaking train,
 When all the oblig'd desert, and yet complain.

On this occasion he could freely pardon the exultation, triumph, and interruption of the conquering party ; but he could not form a more sanguine wish for the happiness of the country, than that in this day

of difficulty, calamity and distress, an administration might be formed as able, disinterested, and upright, but more fortunate than that of Lord North.

In this active contest the lords had yet taken no share: the Earl of Shelburne had obtained a summons of the House on an intended motion for the removal of ministers; but before the appointed day the cabinet had surrendered. On his apology for not presenting the intended proposition, nothing remarkable occurred but a manly speech from Lord Stormont, who in Lord North's name as well as his own, defied crimination, and courted inquiry. He made an ardent eulogy on Lord North, whose character, he said, had conquered even envy: to the most splendid talents he added the most ardent zeal for the public good and the glory of his sovereign; the most perfect disinterestedness, and an integrity which even slander had not dared to tarnish.

Such was the close of the first permanent administration formed during the reign of George III. From the prime minister the acts of government took their character; and in speaking of him, his most inveterate opponents never accused his warmest friends of exaggeration. Of his character and attainments when he was raised to the office of chancellor of the exchequer, mention has already been made, and what remains for history to record has been in a great degree anticipated. His eloquence was less distinguished by peculiar splendour of diction, than by suavity, perspicuity, and arrangement. The impression of his harangues was aided by an extraordinary degree of candour, and ingenuous confidence, which were known to be unassumed, and convinced the hearers of the purity of his motives, even though they did not assent to the propriety of his measures. His temper was seldom ruffled; and though reiterated attacks sometimes extorted a sarcastic sally, his wit, of which he possessed an uncommon fecundity, never left on the minds, even of those whom he overwhelmed with

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Lord Shel-
burne's in-
tended mo-
tion.

Character of
Lord North.

CHAP. XLII. ridicule a sentiment of rancour. His honour was unblemished, his integrity unquestionable ; and “in a long and stormy, and, at length, an unfortunate administration, he had many political opponents, almost without a personal enemy⁸.” These estimable qualities were supposed to be in some degree counteracted by too great a facility in adopting the suggestions of others ; the absence of that strictness or severity which is often necessary to enforce and ensure exertion, gave the appearance of procrastination ; and a want of energy seemed to pervade the other departments of administration.

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⁸ Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. vii. 8vo. Preface.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-THIRD:

1781 — 1782.

View of the new ministry — measures they had resolved to execute before they came into office. — Affairs of Ireland. — Meeting of delegates of volunteers. — Motion of Mr. Eden in the British parliament. — King's message. — Declaration of rights voted by the Irish parliament. — Consequent proceedings in England. — Efforts for limiting influence. — Contractors bill. — Revenue officers bill. — Resolutions respecting the Middlesex election rescinded. — Disfranchisement of Cricklade. — Bill compelling the holders of patent offices to reside. — Exertions of clubs and public bodies for a reform of parliament. — Mr. Pitt's motion. — Exertions respecting economy. — King's message. — Burke's bill passes in an altered state. — Arrears of the civil list discharged. — Efforts at pacification. — Negotiation with Holland — its failure — offers to mediate renewed. — Mr. Grenville sent to Paris to open a direct negotiation — terms proposed by him. — Efforts of France in the West Indies. — Rodney's victory over De Grasse — his recall — honours paid him. — Slow progress of negotiation. — Death of the marquis of Rockingham — Change of the ministry. — Prorogation of parliament. — King's speech.

THE new cabinet was thus composed: The Marquis of Rockingham (from whom it was called the Rockingham administration) first lord of the treasury; Lord John Cavendish, chancellor of the exchequer; admiral Keppel, now raised to the dignity of viscount, first lord of the admiralty; the Duke of Grafton, lord privy seal; Earl Camden, president of the council; the Duke of Richmond, master general of the ordnance, and a knight of the garter; the Earl of Shelburne and Mr. Fox, joint secretaries of state; General Conway, commander in chief; and Mr. Dunning, created Lord Ashburton, chancellor of the

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View of the
new minis-
try.

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duchy of Lancaster. The only member of the late administration who retained a seat in the cabinet, was the lord chancellor, Thurlow.

Several other departments of state were filled by persons of eminent rank and talent; among the most conspicuous of whom were the Duke of Portland, lord lieutenant of Ireland; Mr. Burke, paymaster general of the forces, and a privy councillor; Mr. Thomas Townshend, secretary at war; colonel Barré, treasurer of the navy; Mr. Sheridan, under secretary of state; Sir William Howe, lieutenant-general of the ordnance; his brother, created a viscount, was appointed to command the grand fleet; the honourable Thomas Pelham was surveyor general of the ordnance; the Duke of Manchester, lord chamberlain; and the Earl of Effingham, treasurer of the household. Mr. Kenyon was attorney, Mr. John Lee solicitor-general; and Sir Fletcher Norton soon afterward obtained a peerage, by the title of Lord Grantly.

Their opinions and talents.

This administration comprised sufficient integrity and talent to justify the ardent hopes of the public; but many perceived, that from the heterogeneous nature of the materials, the edifice could not be durable. The strange combination of parties had been described in the House of Commons, by an expressive metaphor, a rope of sand^a; and even in the moment of their triumph over Lord North, their discordances of opinion produced, in two instances, smart animadversions and explanatory declarations.^b

Mr. Fox, though not nominally the head, was generally regarded as the principal person in administration; his powerful talents, acknowledged by all parties, and his unrivalled popularity, placed him at such a distance from his associates, that, had his disposition been infected with the slightest taint of arrogance, he might have maintained, by the force of

^a See Debates, 6th March, 1782.

^b See Debates, 4th and 20th March, 1782.

pnblc opinion, an uncontrouled sovereignty in the cabinet. Mr. Fox, however, sought no peculiar distinction; and his popularity reflected on his associates a rich glow, which at once animated the hopes, and fixed the regards of the nation. But although he was superior to the little arts of exclusion, his impetuosity in enforcing, and inflexibility in maintaining his opinions were frequent subjects of complaint. Some members of administration were personally odious to each other; Lord Thurlow, by a long course of contest in both Houses, had attracted peculiar dislike; and from his manly unbending temper, the ministry expected impediment rather than support. Perhaps he was only suffered to retain his place from the difficulty of adjusting the rival claims of the juris-prudential members of the new ministry. Mr. Fox, some time before the overthrow of the late cabinet, acknowledged that his adherents detested Lord Thurlow's sentiments on the constitution; but added, they did not mean to proscribe him. ^c Of Lord Shelburne, Mr. Fox professed not to entertain a better opinion; while speaking in terms of affectionate veneration of Lord Rockingham, he described Lord Shelburne's character as the exact reverse, and declared that his repugnance to an association in office with him and Lord Thurlow was only overcome by the satisfactory pledge for the integrity of administration, afforded by the ascendancy of the Marquis.

The particular measures in which the administration agreed before their accession to power, were stated by two of the principal members to be: first, an offer to America of unconditional independence, as the basis of a negotiation for peace; secondly, the establishment of economy, by means of Mr. Burke's bill; and thirdly, the annihilation of influence over either branch of the legislature. ^d

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Measures
they had
concerted.

^c 8th March.

^d See the speech of the Duke of Richmond and General Conway, *Debates*, 9th and 10th of July 1782.

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Affairs of
Ireland.

Before either of these measures could be brought forward, ministers were compelled, by imperious circumstances, to adopt and mature a fourth, "that of securing the freedom of Ireland, in the most unequivocal and decisive manner."^c The weakness of the British government in Ireland, and strength of the assertors of their independence on the British parliament, inspired the party called patriots with ardent hopes of obtaining important concessions. County and other popular meetings were held, addresses voted, and instructions given to members for extinguishing the powers reserved to the privy council under Poyning's law, procuring a habeas corpus act, establishing the independence of the judges, abolishing sinecure places, inquiring into the expenditure of the public money, securing the freedom of trade, and revising the act for equalizing duties; and as the best means of obtaining these ends, the members were instructed not to concur in granting supplies for a longer period than six months. The volunteer associations were encouraged in proportion as they displayed a disposition to co-operate in these views. In debating the address on the lord lieutenant's speech to parliament, Mr. Grattan, a distinguished patriot, adverted with spleen to the manner in which the loyal exertions of the Irish were commended from the throne, while the volunteers were not expressly mentioned. He wished he could reconcile royal ears to that salutary and wholesome name. When the address was carried, thanks were unanimously voted to the volunteers for their continuance and spirited exertions. A similar proposition was offered in the Upper House, where Lord Bellamont, the only dissentient, distinguished between their services and their establishment; he honoured their zeal and admired their gallantry. He would lead them with confidence, accompany them with affection; with

9th Oct.
Transactions
in the Irish
parliament.

10th Oct.

^c General Conway's speech, 10th July.

them he would be foremost in the breach, last on the mine ; but he would not perpetuate a claim which was without legal foundation : he valued them as the purest bullion, but would not recognize them as sterling, until they received the stamp of majesty.

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In pursuance of the popular instructions, Mr. Grattan offered a bill to explain, amend, and limit the mutiny act. His motion was rejected, but renewed early in the ensuing month by Lord Arran, and evaded by a motion of delay for six months. Six peers joined in a protest, declaring the measure equally beneficial to Great Britain and Ireland.

13th Nov.
8th Dec.
15th Feb.
1782.
Meetings of
the delegates
of volunteers.

On the failure of this effort, the volunteers of the province of Ulster assembled at Dungannon, assumed a deliberative character, of which they affirmed themselves not to be deprived by associating in arms. Their resolutions affected to adjust many important points of government: the claim of any body of men, other than the King, lords, and commons of Ireland, to legislate for that kingdom ; the powers exercised by the privy councils of both kingdoms, under colour of the law of Poynings ; all burdens or obstructions impeding their trade with neutral countries, imposed by any other power than the parliament of Ireland ; a mutiny bill not limited in duration from session to session ; and the refusal or delay of the right to secure the independence of judges, and impartial administration of justice, were declared unconstitutional, illegal, and grievances. They further announced their unalterable determination to seek redress, and pledged themselves to each other, and to their country, not to countenance any candidate at any ensuing election, who had not supported or would not support their resolutions. They resolved the right of private judgment in matters of religion, to be equally sacred in all ; and therefore as Irishmen, Christians, and Protestants, rejoiced in the relaxation of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics, conceiving the measure to be fraught with the happiest

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consequences to the union and prosperity of Ireland. They made arrangements for future meetings, appointed a committee to represent them in a general assembly of delegates of corps in Dublin, and voted an address to the minority of the Irish parliament, for their noble and spirited, though ineffectual efforts in defence of the great commercial and constitutional rights of the country. “ Go on;” they said, “ the almost unanimous voice of the people is with you ; and in a free country, the voice of the people must prevail. We know our duty to our sovereign, and are loyal: we know ourselves, and are resolved to be free.”

Feb. and
March.

Deriving new hopes from these resolutions and the spirit they indicated, Mr. Grattan moved an address to the King, declaratory of the rights of Ireland to an independent legislature, notwithstanding the power of controul assumed by the parliament of England ; but his motion was negatived, as was another for a bill to quiet the proprietors of estates in Ireland under British acts of parliament. As this measure tended also to affirm that Great Britain had no right to legislate for Ireland, Mr. Yelverton, as a middle course, or temperate expedient, procured, by the concurrence of all parties, an act for making several laws passed in Great Britain, and affecting Ireland, acts of the Irish parliament. At this period the struggle for power in England terminated in the recal of the Earl of Carlisle, who had held the viceroyalty since December 1780.

8th April.
Motion of
Mr. Eden in
the British
parliament
respecting
Ireland.

The Easter recess afforded ministers leisure to arrange the affairs of their departments, and procure the re-election of such as were members of the Lower House. On the meeting of parliament, Colonel Luttrell introduced the affairs of Ireland, by stating the prevailing discontents, and the desire of ministers to remove them, and requiring from Mr. Eden, who was a member of the House of Commons in Ireland,

and had filled the situation of principal secretary to Lord Carlisle, an explanation of the affairs of that kingdom.

1782.

Mr. Eden readily entered on the task, describing the conduct of government and opposition for the two last years, and descanting on the valour, loyalty, and popularity of the volunteers, whose desires and sentiments were the desires and sentiments of all Ireland. The declaration of rights, so unanimously and ardently cherished, could no longer be opposed with success: the attempt would be as vain as to make the river Thames flow up Highgate-hill. He did not believe the Irish would abuse the advantages they might obtain, and they would be restrained from adopting measures injurious to England, since the King, with the advice of a responsible cabinet, must sanction all their acts. Beside the declaration of rights, the volunteers, or, in another word, Ireland, had called for a *habeas corpus*, and obtained it; a bill for making commissions of judges *quamdiu bene se gesserint*, demanded by them, was in its progress through parliament; the required alteration of the mutiny act might easily be granted, and a modification of Poyning's law, which would satisfy the people, could not be dangerous to England. He then moved for leave to bring in a bill "repealing so much of the act of the sixth of George I. as asserted a right in the King and parliament of Great Britain to make laws binding the kingdom and people of Ireland." He did not wish to be precipitate; but the recess of the Irish parliament would terminate in eight days, and Mr. Grattan would then renew and carry his motion for a declaration of rights. It would surely then be advisable to anticipate the wishes of the people, to afford them a pledge of the sincerity of England, a security for the permanency of the constitution, and of that trade they were so anxious to preserve.

Three members, all natives of Ireland, rose to second Mr. Eden's motion; but Mr. Fox declaimed

CHAP. with indignation against the indecent hurry of bringing it forward on the first appearance of the new ministry in parliament, before they had time to make arrangements, or digest measures more effectual and important than a little partial repeal, proposed only to acquire a small portion of popularity. Had the late ministry displayed but a moderate share of that alertness which now so much misbecame the mover, England had not been involved in her present difficulties. Moderate concession granted to temperate requests would have prevented those haughty claims which would wrench the kingdom of Ireland from the legislation of Great Britain ; but the nation was now reduced to abject unconditional submission. He wished Mr. Eden to withdraw his motion ; which was agreed to, after a debate in which many reflections were made on the harsh manner of notifying Lord Carlisle's recal, and his removal from the lord lieutenancy of the east riding of Yorkshire, which ministers had restored to Lord Carmarthen.

9th April.
King's
message.

The next day Mr. Fox submitted to parliament a message from the King, expressing concern at the discontents and jealousies of Ireland, and recommending to the serious consideration of the House the means of satisfactory adjustment. In moving the address on this message, Fox declared the resolution of ministers to act effectually, and not patch up a temporary cessation of claims, leaving to their successors the dangers of an unsettled constitution. The pretensions of the Irish parliament and people, comprehended not only commercial rights and privileges, but legislative powers and royalty. The hasty step proposed by Mr. Eden, would be unwise and impolitic. Time must be allowed for deliberation, and the acquisition of perfect information, which ministers would faithfully submit to parliament, hoping that the happy, speedy, and permanent conclusion of so important an affair, would be forwarded by all the ability, zeal, affection, and honesty of both kingdoms. The ad-

dress was voted without opposition ; as was a similar C H A P.
XLIII. testimony of respect from the Upper House, on the motion of Lord Shelburne.

The speeches of both secretaries of state were profuse in general acknowledgments toward the Irish, with a reserve of due consideration for the dignity of Great Britain. Their declarations were involved in studied mystery ; but it appeared from the observations of Mr. Fox that the large concessions recommended by Mr. Eden were not intended to be made.

Any hesitation or variety of sentiment which might have been entertained in the British cabinet was, however, abruptly terminated by the decision of the Irish House of Commons, where Mr. Grattan, as Mr. Eden had predicted, moved an address to the throne, containing a full and explicit declaration of the rights of Ireland as claimed by the people and the delegates of the volunteers. His speech was uncommonly fervid : he remembered Ireland, he said, when she was a child, he had beheld her progress from injuries to arms, from arms to liberty. The Irish were no longer afraid of the French, nor of any nation, nor of any minister. If men turned their eyes to the rest of Europe, they found the ancient spirit expired, liberty ceded, or empire lost ; nations subsisting on the memory of past glory, and guarded by mercenary armies. But Ireland, quitting such examples, had become a model to them ; she had excelled modern, and equalled ancient Europe. The meeting of military delegates at Dungannon was a great event, an original measure ; and like all original measures, matter of surprise till it became matter of admiration. He compared it to the English convention parliament, or the assembly of barons at Runnymead ; all were original transactions, not flowing from precedent, but containing in themselves precedent and principle. All great constitutional questions had been lost, the public had been lost, had they depended only on parliament : but they had fallen into the hands of the

1782.
11th.

16th April.
Declaration
of rights
voted by the
Irish parlia-
ment.

Grattan's
celebrated
speech.

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people, and by the people would be preserved. The Irish volunteers were associated for the preservation of the laws, but the claims of the British parliament were subversive of all law. The volunteers had supported the rights of the Irish parliament against those temporary trustees who would have relinquished them. But England had no reason to fear the Irish volunteers: they would die for England and her majestic race of men. Allied by liberty as well as allegiance, the two nations formed a constitutional confederacy; the perpetual annexation of the crown was one great bond, but liberty was a still greater. It would be easy to find a King, but impossible for the Irish to find a nation who could communicate to them a great charter, save only England. This made England a natural connexion; and every true Irishman would exclaim — *Liberty with England* — but — *at all events — Liberty!*^f

His reward.

The motion was carried without a division, though not without debate; and the gratitude of the nation was shewn toward the popular orator, by a parliamentary grant of fifty thousand pounds, for the purpose of purchasing an estate, and erecting a mansion.

17th May.
Consequent
proceedings
in the British
parliament.

Instructed by these resolves, and by the evident determination throughout the country to support them to all extremities, ministers no longer hesitated respecting the quality or mode of concession. Mr. Fox, in a committee of the whole House, expatiated on the claims of Ireland, allowing them to be founded in justice, and such as he, while out of office, had always maintained. Ireland had clearly and plainly stated her wants; he should be as plain; and though perhaps he might have been better pleased with a different mode of asking, still he would meet her on her own terms. Whatever blame might be discovered in the course of the business, he imputed to the late administration, and concluded by moving

^f See a report of this speech in the *Remembrancer*, vol. xiv. p. 18.

"for an act repealing that of the sixth of George I. for securing the dependence of Ireland."

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Mr. Thomas Pitt seconded the motion, and members of all parties concurred in applauding it; Lord Beauchamp alone expressed a doubt that the repeal, leaving the question of right undecided, would not satisfy the Irish nation. The motion passed without a division, as did two others, one for an address to the King, praying the adoption of measures for rendering the connexion between the two kingdoms solid and permanent; and another declaring the interests of both inseparable.

The proceedings in the Upper House were nearly similar, and no division arose. Lord Loughborough, however, pointed out several inconveniences which might possibly ensue from the extensive construction of the resolutions, and recommended some delay, for the sake of preparation, and to avoid that precipitancy which would seem to result from fear.

The repealing act passed both Houses in general silence. Its reception in Ireland justified, in some degree, Lord Beauchamp's anticipation: for Mr. Flood, by maintaining that the concession was insufficient, inasmuch as the principle on which the act of George I. was founded was not renounced, wrested from Mr. Grattan, who asserted the contrary, a portion of his popularity.^g The Irish parliament, however, shewed great satisfaction at the acquisition, and voted addresses of thanks, and a hundred thousand pounds for a levy of twenty thousand seamen for the British navy.

In prosecution of another avowed object, the limitation of influence, the popular measures presented in former sessions were revived. The bill for excluding contractors, was in a committee before the expulsion of the late administration; it was now amended and recommitted, and passed the House of Commons with inconsiderable opposition. In the Lords, the

11th and
14th June.

27th June.

8th April.
Efforts for
limiting in-
fluence.Contractors
bill.

^g See reports of the debate on this subject. *Remembrancer*, vol. xiv. p. p. 307.
319.

CHAP. principle was strenuously, and with great force of
 XLIII. argument, opposed by the lord chancellor and Lord
 Mansfield. In the committee, Lord Ashburton suc-
 1782. cessfully proposed an amendment, exempting from
 the operation of the bill those who made contracts for
 the produce of their own estates ; but the House of
 Commons disagreed, and the bill passed in its original
 form.

24th and 27th May. 8th to 25th April. With equal eagerness, the bill for preventing re-
 Revenue of-
 ficers bill.

2d June.

With equal eagerness, the bill for preventing revenue officers from voting in parliamentary elections was pressed in the House. It was strenuously though unsuccessfully opposed in the Commons ; but a rider was added to prevent its extending to those who held places for life ; they, it was argued, could not be under the dominion of influence. On the third reading in the Upper House, Lord Mansfield made an able and eloquent speech against the principle of the bill ; he was answered by the Bishop of Peterborough, and the Marquis of Rockingham, who declared his situation as first lord of the treasury would be extremely uneasy if the bill was rejected. In seventy boroughs, he said, the election depended chiefly on revenue officers. Nearly twelve thousand of these persons created by the late administration, possessed votes in other places ; and he could not without remorse subject them, by his influence, to the necessity, or at least, the imputation of voting against the dictates of gratitude and their consciences. This curious argument, which implied that unless the voters were deprived of the power of doing wrong, the minister could not refrain from compelling them, terminated the debate, and the bill passed.^h

3d May.
 Resolution
 respecting
 the Middle-
 sex election
 rescinded.

Another sacrifice to popularity, in the shape of reform, was the expunction from the journals of the resolution of the seventeenth of February 1769, respecting the Middlesex election : the motion being made and seconded by Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Byng,

^h 34 to 18. There were several divisions in the House of Commons in the proportion of 7 or 8 to 1.

members for the county. Mr. Fox opposed it on the principle that the House of Commons ought, for the advantage of the people, to have the privilege of expelling those whom they, as representatives, thought unworthy of a seat, and the privilege was too valuable to be surrendered. In support of this doctrine, he framed an extraordinary case. "Suppose," he said, "the bill for excluding contractors had been rejected by the House of Lords, and the House of Commons had come to a resolution of their own, that no person holding a contract should have a seat; the contractors now in parliament would be expelled, but might be re-elected; and then, if the inherent privilege did not impede it, those very men whom the House had declared improper to sit, must remain amongst them." He acknowledged himself, however, indifferent to the event of the motion, as the proceedings against the magistrates of London had demonstrated, that whatever privileges the House might possess, they could not be exercised in opposition to the voice of the people.

Mr. Dundas, although on the same side, warmly reprobated the unconstitutional doctrines of Mr. Fox; and the motion was carried by a great majority.¹ Elated with this final triumph, after an annual defeat, Mr. Wilkes published a letter expressive of his *raptures*, and his resolution to persevere in the cause of freedom and parliamentary reform: but few people now participated his *raptures*; the question had ceased to be interesting, and the popularity attached to the name of Wilkes had been repeatedly transferred to others, and was in a state of daily fluctuation.

Early in the session, a bill was introduced for disfranchising the borough of Cricklade. A committee on the petition of an unsuccessful candidate, reported that great abuses had been committed; and Sir Harbord Harbord affirmed, that out of two hundred and forty voters, eighty-three had already been convicted of bribery, and actions for the

18th Feb.
Disfran-
chisement of
Cricklade.

CHAP. same offence were pending against forty-three others. In the House of Commons the disfranchisement was opposed with considerable ability, but without effect. It was justified on the same principles as that of the electors of New Shoreham. “When that bill was shewn to the late Earl of Chatham,” said Mr. Montagu, “he expressed his joy at finding the borough removed from Bengal to its ancient situation in the county of Sussex.”—If the present were rejected, Cricklade would certainly be removed from Wiltshire to the East Indies.

3d May. The progress of the bill through the House of Lords was rendered remarkable by the zeal and ability with which the lord chancellor, Lord Mansfield, and Lord Loughborough opposed, and Lords Grantry and Ashburton supported it. The latter lords found a powerful auxiliary, or rather an able leader, in the Duke of Richmond; but his grace, in the course of debate, reproached the lord chancellor with indiscriminately resisting every measure of regulation or improvement. Lord Fortescue, enlarging on the same topic, bewailed the degraded dignity of the House, lowered and tarnished by a profusion of lawyers. It was no longer a House of Peers, but a mere court of law, where all the solid, honourable principles of truth and justice were shamefully sacrificed to the low pettifogging chicanery and quibbles used in Westminster Hall. That once venerable, dignified, and august assembly, resembled a meeting of attorneys in a Cornish court, acting as barristers. The learned lord on the woolsack seemed fraught with nothing but contradictions, and law subtleties and distinctions, and all that.

8th May. Such remarks obtained no answer, and did not prevent the exertions of opposition; evidence was called and counsel heard against the bill; when the Duke of Richmond again gave vent to his indignation against what he termed the professional phalanx. Attacked by lawyers above the bar, and interrupted by lawyers below, he considered himself unequal to the contest;

and therefore obtained the aid of counsel in support of the bill, which finally passed, great majorities in its favour, appearing on every division^k.

A more important and beneficial law was introduced under the influence of Lord Shelburne, for compelling future holders of patent places in the colonies or plantations, to reside, and act in their offices.

Hitherto all the reforms supported by administration had been sanctioned by the concurrence of parliament. One remained on which the public felt considerably interested, from the great pains which had been employed to procure, in all popular assemblies, votes and resolutions in its favour, and to exhibit it to the people as a measure on which their freedom and prosperity depended: this was a reform in the representative system of the House of Commons.

Measures for enforcing this reform were systematically adopted in the preceding year, by the delegates of the associated or petitioning bodies, comprising pretended representatives of the counties of York, Surrey, Hertford, Huntingdon, Middlesex, Essex, Kent, Devon, and Nottingham, and the city of Westminster. They resolved, that the public evils were produced by the gross inadequacy in parliamentary representation, which the addition of a hundred county members in due proportions would tend to correct. The septennial act was declared a violation of the rights of the people, which impaired the constitutional connexion between them and their representatives, and exposed parliament to great unconstitutional influence: and its repeal would form a strong barrier against the inroads of parliamentary corruption, and the alarming influence of the crown. These resolves were enforced by addresses to the electors of Great Britain, urging the necessity of reform, by statements deduced from history, and arguments founded on right and policy.^l The livery of London,

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1782:
Bill compelling the holders of offices to reside.

Exertions of clubs and public bodies for a reform of parliament.

March and
Ap. 1781.

^k On the commitment, 18th May, the division was 47 to 22.

31st Jan.

1782

^l See Remembrancer, vol. xiii. p. 193.

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XLIII.
1782.

7th May.
Mr. Pitt's
motion.

in a common-hall, resolved, that the inequality of representation, and the corrupt state of parliament, had produced the war, the dismemberment of the empire, and all other grievances. The only adequate remedy would be found in re-establishing the constitutional share of the people in government, and in a frequent election of representatives, according to ancient usage. They also established a corresponding committee. Against this meeting, however a protest was signed by five of the common-council.

The cause, thus espoused by these committees and public bodies, was introduced to parliament by the brilliant talents of Mr. Pitt. In a speech of great ability, he described the evils which had arisen, and might arise from the unequal representation. Some boroughs were under the command, and others in the possession of the treasury. The influence of government was contested in others, not by the electors, but by some powerful individual assuming hereditary right. Some boroughs had no actual existence in property, population, trade, nor any weight in the political balance, except in the return of members; and others, in the lofty possession of English freedom, claimed no right but that of bringing their votes to market: they had no other market, no other property, no other stake in the country than the price of their votes. Such boroughs were the most dangerous of all. They never consulted the interests of the public, but offered their representation to the best purchaser: they were properly within the jurisdiction of the Carnatic; and it was a well-known fact, that the nabob of Arcot had seven or eight members in that house. Foreign influence had ever been considered dangerous; and if the nabobs of India could acquire such an influence, why might not a foreign power at enmity with Great Britain, acquire a similar share by the same means in the councils of the nation? Some persons had suggested, that the best means of effecting a nearer relation between the

representatives and the people, would be to deprive the rotten and corrupt boroughs of a part of their members, and add them to those places which had a greater stake and interest in the country. Another mode recommended, was shortening the duration of parliaments. But all consideration of these he should for the present entirely omit, referring the task of selection to a committee freely chosen. The matter of complaint was clear ; his own judgment was strengthened by the advice of some of the first characters in the kingdom, and of some on whom the grave had closed. Of one of these in particular, every member in the House could speak with more freedom than himself. That person was not apt to indulge vague and chimerical speculations inconsistent with practice and expediency ; and the opinion of that person was, that unless first principles were, in this respect, recurred to, and a more solid and equal representation of the people established, by which the proper constitutional connexion might be revived, this nation, with the greatest aptitudes for happiness and grandeur of any other on the face of the earth, must be confounded with the mass of those whose liberties were lost in the corruption of the people. He moved, and was seconded by alderman Sawbridge, " for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of representation in parliament, and to report to the House their observations thereon."

The first opponent of the motion was Mr. Thomas Pitt, who anticipated and deprecated the constructions to which his sentiments would be liable from those who considered him merely as proprietor and representative of Old Sarum. He objected to the time of introducing the subject, when government was already overloaded with projects of reform. Mere theorists attempted to establish the wild system, that nations could only be free where no individual was bound but by laws to which he had con-

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1782.

CHAP. XLIII. sented, either in person or by a representative whom he had actually nominated. History sufficiently proved that such a principle never applied to the British constitution. Nothing like equality of representation could be found. Rutland as a county, returned as many representatives as Devonshire or Yorkshire. At first, counties alone were represented, afterward great cities, towns, and places of note, and even inconsiderable villages. The rule of their addition could not be defined, but most assuredly it was not that of equal representation, or uniform importance; nor was it fit, at this period, to try chartered privileges by a new rule which never did apply to them. However plausible and popular the idea of equal representation, it was of all others the most extravagant, impracticable, visionary, and absurd. If such a principle was essential to a free government, there never had been, nor ever could be a free government.

The real origin and purpose of the parliament, was to balance the power of the crown. The members of the lower house, however variously elected, stood, individually and collectively, as representatives, of all the subjects of Great Britain. If they effected the great purpose of defending the people at large against the encroaching power and increasing influence of the crown; if, as faithful guardians, they held the public purse; if they preserved the laws of the country from violation, they answered every end of their institution, whatever irregularities a speculist might fancy he discovered in their appointment; for that country truly enjoys the benefit of civil liberty, where the laws hold an equal course to all, not where all are equally represented.

“ Is all influence in this House,” he proceeded, “ equally dangerous, equally alarming, equally subversive of the great principle I have endeavoured to establish? What was the contest with the crown before the establishment of the lower house? A contest not for liberty, but for power, between the King, the barons, and the clergy. What has been the change

that since its origin has thrown weight into the balance of this House? The aristocratical weight of property, which, increasing in this House, has enabled it to resist the augmenting influence of the crown. The House of Lords can no longer be relied on as a counterpoise; the barons are no longer the barrier against the encroachments of the crown. Let us take care, that by an innovation purely democratical, and which shall remove from us that influence to which we owe so much of our importance, we do not reduce ourselves again to that state, when the greatest influence of all may crush us under feet."

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The motion, he observed, would place parliament in a cruel dilemma; if negatived, the prejudices of the times would represent the House as partial, prejudiced, and corrupt; shutting their ears against evils fatal to the public liberty, lest they should be obliged to confess the necessity of a remedy. If the proposition was adopted, they must launch into a sea without a shore; a general inquiry without any defined or specified object; an inquisition into the state of every borough, which would alarm the feelings of every one interested in so extensive a consideration, while it held out to the public, expectations which the House never meant to satisfy, nor ought to satisfy, nor could satisfy, were it ever so expedient. The question was not, whether any specific alteration should be adopted; but whether parliament should open a general shop to receive all the projects of the wildest of projectors; to let loose the imagination of the public on the most delicate, and yet most important of considerations. Bounds could never be set to the inquiry; the torrent could never be restrained; the principle must be carried to its utmost extent, or abandoned; representation, if an inherent or natural, was an universal right; there was no medium. To countenance so general, so undefined a measure, as that on the table, would be an act of madness and infatuation, tending only to tumult and disorder, and

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Rejected.

17th May.
Sawbridge's
annual
motion.
24th.
Mahon's
bill.

every confusion that expectation, followed by disappointment, could operate on the passions of the multitude.

During a long debate, many conspicuous parliamentary characters delivered their sentiments ; Sir George Savile, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Sheridan supported the measure. Its chief opponents were the honourable Mr. Yorke, Mr. Rolle, Mr. M'Donald, Mr. Rigby ; and Mr. Dundas, who particularly distinguished himself by a speech, replete with sound sense and accurate information, and sparkling with genuine wit. The question was rejected by adopting the order of the day.^m

The conduct of ministry was represented to the public as insidious and treacherous ; they were accused of giving a negative, damning support to the proposition, while, by indirect means, they concurred in its failure. Against this charge, which threatened fatal consequences to their popularity, Mr. Fox, at a subsequent period, took great pains to justify himself. He professed warm, unalterable attachment to reform ; but some of his colleagues, particularly Mr. Burke, and Mr. Thomas Townshend, he said, viewed the proposition with disgust and antipathy. Such men he could not influence to speak or vote against their opinions, but what he could, he did ; he persuaded them not to attend the discussion.ⁿ

Alderman Sawbridge renewed his annual attempt to shorten the duration of parliament ; but his motion, though eloquently sustained by Mr. Pitt, was rejected by a large majority.^o Lord Mahon also introduced a bill for preventing bribery and expences at elections, the regulations of which were so strict, as even to prevent the candidate from allowing a carriage to a non-resident voter. Mr. Pitt supported the bill, but it was opposed by Mr. Fox, and the severest of its clauses being rejected, it was withdrawn.

^m 161 to 141.

ⁿ See Mr. Fox's speech at the anniversary dinner, (10th October 1782,) Remembrancer, vol. xiv. p. 293.

^o 149 to 61.

The ministerial undertaking of economical reform was introduced to parliament, by a message from the King to each House, recommending the consideration of an effectual plan of economy, through all branches of the public expenditure. He had taken into consideration a form and regulation in his civil list establishment, which he would speedily submit to parliament for their advice and assistance. "His Majesty," the message proceeded, "has no reserves with his people, on whose affections he rests with a sure reliance, as the best support of the true honour and dignity of his crown and government; and as they have hitherto been his best resource on every emergency, so he regards them as the most solid and stable security for an honourable provision for his person and family."

An address of thanks was voted with unanimous assent; Mr. Burke, in moving it congratulated the House and the kingdom, on the happy era when His Majesty, freed from that secret and injurious council, which stood between him and his people, now spoke to them in the pure and rich benevolence of his own heart. The message was the genuine effusion of paternal care and tenderness; it was what good subjects merited from a good king, and every man would rejoice in and bless the day, when, restored to the dignified independence of his elevated situation, the sovereign was able to participate in their sufferings, to praise and reward their fortitude. It was the best of messages, to the best of people, from the best of Kings.

Mr. Powys in the name of the country gentlemen, declared his warm exultation in the message, and in language formed on Mr. Burke's model, extolled it as a noble and gracious instance of royal benevolence, which would reconcile the people to their burdens.

Mr. Fox too spoke in terms of panegyric and confidence. "His Majesty," he said, "came with almost unparalleled grace to his parliament, and desired to

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1782.

21st June.

15th April.

Exertions

respecting

economy.

King's mes-

sage.

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1782.

Burke's bill
passes in an
altered state.

6th May.

- 13th June.
14th.

participate in the exertions and sufferings of his people, by the reduction of his own peculiar establishments, choosing and wishing to find his support in the hearts of his subjects."

But however confident might be the anticipation of ministers, the bill for retrenching the expences of the household no longer appeared before the public with all the captivating allurements which had been lent to it, while designed by opposition for the embarrassment of government. In the committee, Mr. Burke proposed a saving of seventy-two thousand three hundred and sixty-eight pounds per annum; but he introduced his bill tardily and silently to the House. On the second reading he was goaded into a speech, for the purpose of defending his measure against the imputations it incurred by varying essentially from the original proposition, when the public were taught to expect a golden harvest from economy, and a luxuriant vegetation of liberty, from the prunings of influence. He had omitted a regulation for supplying the royal household by contract, he said, because the measure was generally unpopular. The regulations relative to Wales were abandoned, because they did not appear to please the people, who were taught by a faction to regard them with horror. The retrenchment in the ordnance office he had postponed, if not totally renounced, because that department was filled by a nobleman whose patriotism and frugality would supersede the necessity of restraint. The mint was not yet regulated, because the directors of the bank were unwilling to assume the execution of its duties. The offices of treasurer and cofferer of the household were suffered to remain, because their possessors carried white wands, and their abolition would appear an encroachment on the splendour and dignity of the crown. The duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, it appeared by a subsequent explanation, were left un-reformed, because the clamours which had been raised about Wales might extend to them also. These rea-

sons appeared so trifling, that even Colonel Barré and Mr. Powys expressed themselves not entirely satisfied, and the bill passed dully through the House, barely unopposed, but wholly uncelebrated.

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The retention of appointments which had been formerly descanted on in glowing terms, as extremely onerous and injurious to the public, for no other reason than that they were held by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Ashburton, formed a stigma on the favourite measure, which was not removed by Mr. Burke's disinterestedness in bringing forward a bill regulating his own office, the intent of which was to prevent enormous balances from remaining in the hands of the paymaster of the forces.

The royal message respecting economy was speedily followed by another, requesting a discharge of arrears of civil list, amounting to nearly two hundred and ninety-six thousand pounds; the House voted the requisite sum, and the savings intended to be made by the reform bill were mortgaged for payment of the interest. This mode of blending the two transactions was vehemently decried in the Upper House, as an infringement of their standing order made in 1702, that no bill of regulation should be allowed to pass with the appendage of a clause for granting money. The lord chancellor and Lord Loughborough supported this doctrine with great ability, but the House decided in contradiction to their judgment.^p

2d May.
Arrears of
the civil list
discharged.

3d July.

Some further economical regulations were promised, but none effected during the session. The attorney-general, Mr. Kenyon, distinguished himself by a motion for collecting into the exchequer, the balances in the hands of several paymasters. His original proposition extended to charge the holders of those balances with interest for the sums in hand; but Mr. Fox, with equal ability and judgment, observed, that by so doing, government would place its officers in the

25th June.
Mr. Ken-
yon's mo-
tion.

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same situation with the guardians of a minor. "In the one case," he said, "there is an obligation to make the money superlucrate; in the other none. To claim interest from an accountant would justify him in placing the money outatinterest, and consequently render the public liable for losses." A motion was made for bringing in a bill to carry into effect some of the resolutions moved by Mr. Kenyon, which was, however, after a debate of some warmth, rejected, and the new ministry left in a minority.⁹ Some other unimportant essays were made on the pension list, and some ineffectual attempts to render an object of censure a pension of a thousand pounds conferred on Lord Loughborough.

Efforts of
pacification.

March.
1781.
Retrospect
of negotia-
tion with
Holland.

While the ministry were thus engaged in fulfilling the expectations they had raised respecting domestic regulation, they pursued with equal ardour the great object which made the nation solicitous for their attainment of power, the restoration of peace.

Soon after the commencement of hostilities with Holland, the Empress of Russia offered, through the medium of M. de Simolin, her ambassador, to negotiate a renewal of the ancieat intercourse between the two countries; and Prince Galitzin presented to the States-general a memorial to the same effect. The States of Holland and West Friesland alone declared their acceptance of the offer; but the British court candidly explaining the causes which led to the rupture, particularly the ascendancy of the French party in the Dutch councils, observed, that during the war with France, and in the present disposition of the republic, all reconciliation must be merely superficial, as the Dutch would continue secret auxiliaries of France, under the mask of a pretended alliance with Great Britain. But should any indications appear of a change in this disposition, His Majesty would readily treat for a separate peace, under the sole mediation

of the Empress, who had been the first to offer her good offices.^r

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1781.

Toward the close of the year, the negotiation was renewed; the English party in Holland gained more authority, and hopes were entertained of triumphing over the French faction, who strove to impede the treaty, without openly contravening the Empress. Their first measure was to procure from Sweden an offer to co-operate in the mediation, which the British cabinet refused, alleging their former promise to the Empress.^s Although the States-general shewed more favourable dispositions than formerly toward Great Britain, it was obvious, that if France obtained many of their foreign settlements by compact or recapture, and an apparent naval superiority, no separate treaty with England could take place. The Cape of Good Hope was already under the protection of France: and soon afterward de Bouillé reconquered their most important West India settlements. The escape of M. de Guichen from Kempenfelt, and the great projects meditated by France and Spain in the transatlantic world, together with the hopeless state of the British arms in Europe, the capture of Minorca, and blockade of Gibraltar, gave a decisive turn to the politics of the Hague. Their answer to the offer of the Empress precluded the hope of peace; and an article in the new compacts between Holland and France prevented either from making a separate treaty.

18th Sept.

March.

This intelligence had not reached England when the great change was made in the cabinet. The Rockingham administration had expressed in parliament, with the utmost confidence, the intention of effecting a separate reconciliation. Their endeavours were stimulated by a letter from Prince Galitzin and M. de Marcow, the Russian ministers at the Hague, apprizing them of the prevailing system of the States-

20th.

^r See Annual Register, 1781. Article, State Papers.

^s Ibid.

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19th.
Failure.

Mr. Fox assured M. de. Simolin of the King's earnest desire to renew the friendship, so unhappily interrupted, on the antient footing of the treaty of 1674, and to give immediate orders for an armistice, and requested the mediation and good offices of the Empress.* The British cabinet entertained sanguine hopes of success, and directed foreign ministers to lose no opportunity of cultivating a good understanding with those of Holland; but the republic persisted in the original design of fortifying the connexion with France, and rejected the proposed interference.

April.
Offer of the
Emperor to
mediate.

As the pacific intentions of the new ministry were well known, the imperial ambassador, Count Belgioioso, again proffered the good offices of his court, in a missive, styled in the diplomatic language, *une insinuation verbale*, to which the secretary of state returned a cordial and complying answer. The King, he said, did not wish to prejudge any question, or to exclude any party from the negotiation; neither the States-general, nor the American colonies; he was ardently desirous of peace, and wished that it should be speedy, but it must be equitable.

28th April.

Austria had, however, no right to presume that Great Britain should rely with implicit confidence on her mediatory efforts. It had long been apparent to the English ambassador, that Prince Kaunitz entertained toward the cause of Great Britain sentiments nearly approaching to malevolence. He predicted her failure in the contest, and the necessity of ultimately making large concessions; and when states men publicly indulge in such prophecies, they will rather contribute

* It was said by Mr. Grey in the House of Commons, 2d February 1801, that before Mr. Fox had been in office four and twenty hours, he offered to yield up the principles of the armed neutrality not so much for the sake of making peace with Holland, as of satisfying all the northern powers. See Debrett's Debates, p. 44. 622, 623, and Woodfall. See also a speech by the Marquis of Lansdown, Debrett, 519.

to the event by their own exertions, than suffer their prescience to fall into discredit. Kaunitz entered into the armed confederacy with almost as much zeal as Catharine herself, and was preparing, by the influence of the emperor, to make Venice adopt the same measure. His language to the English ambassador was changed from extreme kindness, to a haughty, harsh, morose tone; and on every misfortune which attended the British arms, the renewal of an offer to mediate was accompanied with revilings and taunts against the proud national spirit, which had frustrated former efforts. This alteration of conduct was the more offensive, as the French ambassador was treated with proportionate confidence, always preferred in audiences, and ostentatiously courted with peculiar homage.

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The Empress of Russia was also to be included in the mediatory commission, but she had, from the beginning of the war, deluded Great Britain with false hopes, and her constant efforts to extend the sphere of the neutral league, and her eager pursuit of personal aggrandisement, leading her to an intimate connexion with Austria, and giving her a bias toward France, made it impossible to expect from her partiality any beneficial results. The cause of Great Britain seemed degraded to the lowest state; ill success, and the prevalent opinion of mismanagement, rendered the espousal of it among the selfish powers of the continent almost disreputable, and, probably, the hope of wringing from the distressed situation of the country, concessions favourable to a system of neutral duplicity, occasioned the eagerness of the imperial courts to assume the task of mediation.

Under these difficult and critical circumstances, the ministry acted with magnanimity and judgment. In conformity with the answers returned by the Bourbon courts, they empowered Sir Robert Murray Keith, the ambassador at Vienna, to commence a treaty under the auspices of their Imperial Majesties. But as Mr. Thomas Grenville was already dispatched, though

Russia joins.

7th May.
Mr. Gren-
ville sent to
Paris.

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without any public character, to open a direct negotiation with M. de Vergennes, and Paris was intended to be the principal scene of business, Sir Robert was instructed not to make, or even much encourage, an overture for negotiation at Vienna; though he was not, by receding from the proposition, to disgust the mediating powers, or create suspicions of the sincerity of Great Britain.

Terms
proposed by
him.

State of
Spain;

France;

The basis of treaty communicated to Mr. Grenville, consisted in two propositions. The independence of the thirteen American colonies; and, in return, a complete restoration of all other matters to the state in which they were placed at the last peace. If these terms seemed too advantageous, after Great Britain had offered to concede to America so much of dominion, that hardly a claim to sovereignty was left, and at a period when the enemy was in possession of almost all the islands in the West Indies, it should be recollected, that the Spanish and French treasuries were in the most abject state of distress. Spain was reduced to a dependence on the subscription of individuals, not in aid, but as the chief support of government; her South American colonies were torn by rebellion; and if England had afforded only slight succours to the insurgents, the whole Spanish marine, and a great land force, would have been required for their reduction. France too was beginning to awake from the dream of financial delusion, and to discover that Necker had proceeded in the war without the imposition of taxes, by borrowing every year, in addition to the current supplies, the interest of previous loans; a system which would in time call for severe impositions, or general bankruptcy. The force and exertions of the enemy were exaggerated by boasts, and the preparations of the late ministry for regaining a preponderance of power in the Caribbean seas, might have inspired hopes and confidence sufficient to await the events of a campaign, the expences of which were already incurred.

The general impatience for peace in England was founded on a despair of success in the principal object of the war, the reduction of America, and a conviction that the whole force of the nation was insufficient to resist the career of the enemy in other quarters. Success would have given a new impulse to popular energy, and frustrated the long labours of an almost successful opposition; but fortune declared against Lord North, and the hasty combination of heterogeneous parties, and their vigorous and persevering assaults on the cabinet, impeded every measure for preventing, and sanctioned the proposition for conceding, the independence of America.

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England.

After the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, the attainment of this object by force appeared no more certain than at any previous period. The resources of America were exhausted, the long interruption of commerce produced a lamentable want of all necessaries, a want felt from the highest to the lowest classes throughout the colonies. No art or coercion could give circulation to the paper currency; and not only the friends of Great Britain, but the warmest adherents of America, considered the maintenance of the army for another year, and still more the establishment of independency, as utterly impossible, and hardly desirable.^t Sir Henry Clinton himself, after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, forwarded an assurance to administration, that with a reinforcement of ten thousand men only, he would be responsible for the conquest of America^u; but before this offer could be made, the ministers, who alone could be expected to give it effect, were shaken; a new system was adopted, active hostilities were no more to be pursued, and Sir Henry Clinton being allowed to retire, was replaced by Sir Guy Carleton.

State of America.

Objections to independence.

The latest struggle of the defeated administration

^t See intercepted Letters of Silas Deane, Remembrancer, vol. xiii. p. 71.

^u From private information.

CHAP. was to avert from the country the disgrace of a hasty and compulsory concession of American independence, to this tended their desire to maintain a war of posts, and their overtures for a coalition. The Rockingham party had long declared, and consistently supported the justice and inevitable necessity of granting independence; but Lord Shelburne had been no less strenuous in asserting that disgrace and calamity must ensue to Great Britain from such a concession. He had even made an explicit declaration in the House of Lords, "that he would never enter into an official situation with any man, however great his abilities, who would either maintain that it was right or consistent to allow the independency of America^w;" and, even in the present session of parliament, Mr. Dunning, his confidential friend and adviser, had treated the proposition as almost amounting to high treason. But Lord Shelburne had either receded from his former opinions, or would not venture to encounter such an opposition as he had witnessed and supported against Lord North.

View of the
West Indies.

If ministers were induced to concede, even before a treaty, the independence of America, by the probability that the superior naval power of France and Spain in the American seas would insure it, an event which had been judiciously prepared by the late ministry, and which occurred soon after they were driven from the helm, shewed the futility of such an expectation.

Efforts of
France.

When the conquest of all the Leeward islands, except Barbadoes and Antigua, left the French no further objects of attack in that quarter, they, with the Spaniards, projected a joint expedition against Jamaica. For this the reinforcement was dispatched under de Guichen, which Kempenfelt had failed in his endeavour to intercept, and

^w See debates in the House of Lords, 7th December 1778; the conclusion of Lord Shelburne's speech.

anticipating the success of the enemy in their ultimate object, opposition lavished censures on administration for permitting Sir George Rodney to sail directly for the West Indies with a reinforcement of twelve sail of the line, when he should have been employed conjointly with Kempenfelt, in preventing the arrival of supplies to the enemy. Ministers, however, wisely judged that the important object of gaining a decided preponderance in the West Indies by the junction of Rodney and Hood, was not to be endangered by the precarious pursuit of inferior advantage. Rodney hoped by his early arrival at Barbadoes to have prevented the fall of St. Christopher's; but while sailing for the relief of that island, met Sir Samuel Hood, who imparted the tidings of its surrender, and the retreat of De Grasse to Martinique.

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After long watching the motions of the French fleet, in order to prevent their junction with the Spaniards, the British admirals succeeded in bringing on a partial action off Guadaloupe; but such was the state of the wind, that only the van of the British fleet was engaged, and the enemy was enabled to withdraw his ships, and baffle all endeavours for renewing the conflict. Two of the French ships, in consequence of this transient encounter, were obliged to seek shelter in Guadaloupe, and after a vigorous, though for some time hopeless pursuit, the British commanders had the good fortune to perceive another far to windward of the main force, repairing her damages. On this ship they bore down, and the exertions of De Grasse for her protection placed the two squadrons in a situation which seemed to preclude the possibility of again avoiding the conflict. The night, which prevented an immediate engagement, was passed in anxious preparation on either side, and at half past seven in the morning, the action was begun. The two fleets met on opposite tacks, and there being little wind, the British ships ranged slowly along, and close under the lee of the enemy's

19th Feb.
Rodney's
arrival.His pursuit
9th April.

11th April.

12th.
and glorious
victory over
De Grasse.

CHAP. line, delivering a tremendous fire, which the French received, and returned with the utmost firmness. At noon Sir George Rodney, in the Formidable, having passed the Ville de Paris, the Count de Grasse's ship, and her second, so close as to be almost in contact, and having made a visible impression on them, by a quick and well directed fire, stood athwart the enemy's line, between the second and third ships, astern of the Ville de Paris, followed and nobly supported by the Duke, Namur, and Canada; the rest of his division coming up in succession. The Formidable wore round; and a signal being made for the van division under Admiral Drake to tack, the British fleet thus gained the wind, and stood upon the same tack with the enemy. By this bold manœuvre the French line was broken, separated, and thrown into confusion: it decided the fate of the day, although it did not end the conflict. The rear of the British fleet being becalmed, did not for sometime get into action, and at last was favoured only by a slight breeze. The French ships being crowded with men, the carnage was prodigious: still, however, they fought with obstinate bravery. Count de Grasse with his own, and the other ships in the centre, withstood till evening all the efforts of the various ships that attacked him. At length Captain Cornwallis of the Canada, a seventy-four gun ship, having compelled the Hector of equal force to strike, left her to be taken possession of by a frigate; and assailed the Ville de Paris, which in two hours he reduced almost to a wreck. Still De Grasse refused to surrender, till, toward sun-set, Sir Samuel Hood in the Barfleur, who had hitherto been becalmed, arriving, and pouring in a destructive fire, the French admiral in ten minutes yielded, after continuing his exertions till only three men were left un-hurt on the upper deck, of whom himself was one. Beside the Ville de Paris, the Hector, Cæsar, and Glorieux of seventy-four guns, and Ardent of sixty-four, were taken, and the Diadem, another seventy-four.

four was sunk by a single broadside from the *Formidable*. Night terminated the engagement, when the British admiral collected his fleet, and took measures for securing the prizes. Unfortunately the *Cæsar* blew up in the night, owing to the licentious conduct of the French seamen ; and a lieutenant and fifty British sailors, with about four hundred prisoners, perished. The *Ville de Paris* was freighted with thirty-six chests of money, destined for the pay and subsistence of the troops in the designed attack on *Jamaica* ; and it seems to have been singularly providential, that the whole train of artillery, with the battering cannon and travelling carriages meant for that expedition, were on board the captured vessels.^x

The loss of men sustained by the British fleet, in the actions of the ninth and twelfth of April, amounted only to two hundred and thirty-seven killed, and seven hundred and sixty wounded ; while that of the French was computed at three thousand slain, and more than six thousand wounded. The French ships that escaped were almost reduced to wrecks. The British line consisted of thirty-six, and the French line of thirty-two ships : but six vessels of *Hood's* division, from the scantiness of the wind, never could be brought into the general action.

Four of the ships which escaped took refuge in the Dutch island of *Curaçoa* ; but the remainder under *Bougainville* and *Vaudreuil* steered for *Cape François*. Sir Samuel *Hood* afterward captured the *Jason* and the *Caton* of seventy-four guns, and two frigates, in the *Mona* passage, between *Hispaniola* and *Porto Rico*. *Rodney*, after an unsuccessful search for the fugitive enemy, repaired to *Jamaica*, where he was hailed with the exultation and gratitude due to a deliverer.

Intelligence of this victory was received in Eng-

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^x The *Ville de Paris* was the largest ship in the French King's service ; she was a present from the city of Paris to Louis XV ; and no expence was spared to render the gift worthy both of the city and the monarch. Her building and fitting for sea are said to have cost a hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds sterling.

CHAP. XLIII. land with the utmost transport, and diminished the popularity of the new administration. The public recollecting with indignation their late invectives against the skill and courage of Rodney, and heard with deep dissatisfaction, that an order was already issued for superseding him, and placing in his stead Admiral Pigott.

17th May.
Motions of
thanks and
honours.

Lord Keppel moved in the House of Lords three resolutions, thanking the commander in chief, Sir Samuel Hood, Admiral Drake, Commodore Affleck, Sir Charles Douglas, and the other officers and commanders of the fleet; and approving the conduct of the seamen, marines, and troops. An altercation arose, not from opposition to the motion, for in that all concurred, but from the eager desire of the late administration, to extort from their successors higher encomiums and greater honours than they were willing to bestow. Rodney's victory was extolled above that of Lord Hawke; the report of an intended peerage was considered not sufficiently explicit; his services would be inadequately rewarded with a rank inferior to that of viscount or earl; and the ministry were reproached for his intended recal. On each of these points many sharp retorts were used on both sides; and Lord Keppel evaded an avowal of the intention to remove the popular commander, by stating that no evidence of the fact existed; it was a vague report, and therefore improperly introduced in debate.

22d.

soth.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Fox moved thanks to Sir George Rodney alone, but, on the suggestion of Lord North, added the flag officers, acknowledging, with frank politeness, his obligation to the ex-minister for the correction, and for his moderation in leaving the amendment to the servants of the crown. In answer to a question from Mr. Rolle, he avowed, without hesitation or circumlocution, that Rodney was superseded. Mr. Rolle founded on this avowal two motions, affirming and censuring the change of the

1782.

His recal.

commanders. Mr. Fox said, the resolution to recal the admiral had been adopted before the intelligence of the late glorious victory arrived ; his conduct at St. Eustatia had excited prejudices, and made the planters his enemies ; but his newly-acquired glory was sufficient to balance his former demerits, and he was willing to bury in oblivion all inquiries, unless provoked by the intemperate zeal of the admiral's friends. Mr. Burke adopted the same sentiments, observing, that if there was a bald spot on the head of Rodney, he had no objection to cover it with laurels. These applauses, mixed with threats, occasioned severe animadversions in the House, and were warmly resented by the public. Mr. Rolle's first motion was, however, evaded by the previous question, and his second withdrawn. A monument was voted in commemoration of captains Bayne, Blair, and Lord Robert Manners, who were slain in the late actions. Sir George Rodney obtained a pension, and was created a baron of Great Britain ; Sir Samuel Hood received the same rank in the Irish peerage ; and admiral Drake and commodore Affleck were made baronets.

Meanwhile the negotiation for peace proceeded with discouraging tardiness. The French availed themselves of the frankness of the British administration to injure their characters. Prince Kaunitz spoke with haughty indignation of the contempt shewn to the mediating powers by commencing a direct negotiation ; derided the British cabinet for begging peace at every door ; refused to admit that France was equally blameable for accepting as England for making such overtures, and expressed no satisfaction at the late glorious victory.

If jealousy of the naval power of Great Britain occasioned this indifference, the ministry employed the most effectual means to remove it, by a prompt declaration that the event made no alteration in their desire for peace, or in the terms proposed as a basis.

C H A P.
XLIII.
1782.

23d May.

May.
Slow pro-
gress of ne-
gotiation.

4th June.

C H A P.

XLIII.

1782.

21st June.

Death of the
Marquis of
Rocking-
ham.

3d June.

1st July.

Changes in
the ministry.

France, however, still placing sanguine reliance on exertions they had prepared to make in the East Indies and before Gibraltar, sought to protract the treaty by artifice, without precluding themselves from the means of advancing in it, should their hopes be frustrated. M. de Vergennes remitted, through Mr. Grenville, a paper approving the peace of Paris as the basis of negotiation, but proposing so many and such vague exceptions, relative to every quarter of the globe, that almost every trace of that treaty was obliterated.^y

Before definitive measures could be adopted, an event happened which occasioned a new revolution in the British cabinet. The Marquis of Rockingham had long been in a declining state of health. The debate on the bill for disqualifying revenue officers was the last in which he bore a part, and he then declared that a prevalent disorder^z affected him so severely, that he was sometimes not in possession of himself. In less than a month afterward he expired, and the appointment of Lord Shelburne to be his successor as first lord of the treasury, served as the signal (for it was denied to be the cause)^a for the resignation of several conspicuous members of the Rockingham party. The following changes were consequently made in the ministry: Lord Grantham and Mr. Thomas Townshend were appointed secretaries of state, instead of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox; the honourable William Pitt, to the chancellorship of the exchequer, resigned by Lord John Cavendish; Richard Jackson and Edward James Elliot, and the honourable John Jefferies Pratt, and John Aubrey, Esquires, obtained seats at the treasury and admiralty boards, vacated by Lord Althorpe and Mr.

^y For all the particulars relative to this negotiation, I have consulted the official correspondence.

^z It acquired the name of influenza.

^a See Debates in the Houses of Lords and Commons, 9th, 10th, and 11th July, and 5th December, 1782.

Frederick Montagu ; and Lord Dungañnon and Mr. John Townshend ; colonel Barré was appointed paymaster of the forces, in the room of Mr. Burke, and Mr. Dundas received colonel Barré's situation of treasurer of the navy. Sir George Younge became secretary at war, by the promotion of Mr. Thomas Townshend ; Earl Temple, lord lieutenant of Ireland, by the resignation of the Duke of Portland ; and the honourable William Wyndham Grenville, secretary to the lord lieutenant, an office which had been held under the Duke of Portland, by colonel Fitzpatrick.

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XLIII.
1782.

Thus a few months of prosperity dissolved in anger and mutual animosity, that formidable phalanx, which by strenuous parliamentary exertion had shaken the foundation of government, rendered every exercise of royal prerogative odious and dangerous, made the cause of insurrection popular, and taken the cabinet by storm.

This change made for the present no alteration in the conduct of affairs, for in a few days the session of parliament was closed by prorogation.

11th July.
Prorogation
of parlia-
ment.

King's
speech.

The King declared, in his speech, that nothing could be more repugnant to his feelings than the long continuance of so complicated a war, but should the want of a corresponding disposition in the enemy, disappoint his hopes of terminating that calamity, he should still rely on the spirit, affection, and unanimity of his parliament and people, to support the honour of his crown and interests of the nation. "The most triumphant career of victory," he said, "would not excite me to aim at more than fair and reasonable terms of pacification, and I have the satisfaction to add, I see no reason which should induce me to think of accepting less."

CHAPTER THE FORTY FOURTH:

1778 — 1783.

Transactions in America. — *Murder of Huddy.* — *Recal of Sir Henry Clinton.* — *Proceedings on the arrival of Sir Guy Carleton.* — *Discussion respecting captain Asgill.* — *Transactions in the West Indies.* — *War in India.* — *Capture of French settlements.* — *Action between Sir Edward Vernon and Tronjolly.* — *Pondicherry taken.* — *War with the native powers.* — *Efforts of France.* — *Commodore Johnstone's expedition against the Cape of Good Hope frustrated;* — *he takes five Dutch East-Indiamen.* — *Dutch settlements captured.* — *Engagements between Sir Edward Hughes and De Suffrein.* — *Siege of Cuddalore.* — *Naval exertions in Europe.* — *Fate of Rodney's prizes.* — *Loss of the Royal George.* — *Progress of the siege of Gibraltar.* — *Construction of floating batteries.* — *Defeat of the allies in the grand attack.* — *Relief of the garrison by Lord Howe.* — *Negotiations for peace.* — *Provisional treaty with America.* — *State of parties in England.*

C H A P.
XLIV.

1781.

Transactions
in America.

THE continent of America no longer presented its accustomed portion of military interest: the blaze of war which was first kindled, also first languished in the colonies; the surrender of Lord Cornwallis having in effect concluded the martial contest. Soon after the action at Eutaws, Colonel Stewart retreated to the neighbourhood of Charlestown, and Colonel Leslie, who was afterward appointed to command in that district, retired within the walls of the capital. Slight excursions and trivial encounters alone marked the existence of hostility; the British troops were withdrawn from all their late extended possessions in the southern provinces, except Charlestown, Savannah, and a few dependent posts; while the enemy, re-assembling their legislature at Jackson-

burgh, distant only thirty-five miles from the capital of South Carolina, insulted the British government, and issued edicts of regulation, reward and credit, and decrees of confiscation against all friends of the royal cause.^a

C H A P.
XLIV.
1782.
11th Jan.
and 1st Mar.
1782.

The loyalists at New York being filled with alarm and indignation at the tenth article of the capitulation of York Town; Sir Henry Clinton attempted to tranquillize them by circular orders to the different posts of the army, directing that the same attention should in all cases be paid to the interests and security of American loyalists, as to those of the King's troops, and that no distinction or discrimination should prevail. This judicious order, which was subsequently confirmed by the King, produced in a great measure the desired effect.

But when the departure of De Grasse's fleet for the West Indies, and the exertions of Clinton, had quieted all alarms, the inveteracy between loyalists and republicans produced new contentions, and threatened a mode of vengeful hostility more dreadful than any which had yet been pursued. The Americans had always affected to consider the loyalists taken in arms as traitors, amenable to their civil administration. Threats had sometimes restrained the excess of violence, but the Americans frequently refused quarter to loyalists, and often maintained prisoners of that description in a different state of confinement from other military captives, loading them with injuries, depriving them of necessities, and endangering their lives by inhumanity.^b

Murder of
Huddy.

A board of directors of associated loyalists, under the presidency of Governor Franklin, had been long established at New York, invested with administrative powers, the right of nominating officers, and issuing regulations for their guidance and government, sub-

^a See *Remembrancer*, vol. xiv. p. 137. 140.

^b See letter from the board of loyalists to Sir Henry Clinton, dated New York, 27th April, 1782, in the *Remembrancer*, vol. xiv. p. 157.

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1782.

ject to the ratification of the commander in chief. They had a prison for captives brought in by their parties, and the power of exchange or release, but with the express condition of not killing or maltreating their prisoners under pretext of retaliation.

After the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis, many loyalists urged Sir Henry Clinton to threaten vengeance for injuries inflicted on those who had joined the royal standard. The prudent commander, however, declined issuing a proclamation the menaces of which he was not authorized to fulfil, and was deterred, by the advice of the principal refugees, from establishing the civil government, which would have permitted the trial of captive continentals as rebels. But while he was engaged in projects of defence, and while commissioners appointed by him and General Washington were negotiating for an exchange of prisoners, Joshua Huddy, a captain in the service of congress, was taken by a party of loyalists, delivered with two others to Captain Lippencott, one of their body, for the ostensible purpose of being exchanged, conducted into the Jerseys by virtue of an order from the board of loyalists at New York, and there hung on a tree, with a label denoting, that his fate was a retaliation for one White, an associator.

Sir Henry Clinton, highly resenting this audacious outrage on humanity, and insult on himself as commander, arrested Lippencott, and with the concurrence of a council of war, ordered him to be tried for murder. The transaction seemed to indicate a resolution in the loyalists to force measures of revenge, which he had refused to sanction, and he anticipated the insults to which he should be exposed from the resentment of the American general, and the danger of his commissioners, who were in the power of the enemy. Sir Henry Clinton soon received from General Washington an intemperate letter, demanding the delivery to him of Lippencott, or so many additional officers, as, in exchange, would be equivalent to

Huddy, and threatening that, in case of failure, he ^{CHAP.} would resort to measures of retaliation. Clinton ^{XLIV.} expressed surprise and displeasure at this improper language; he had taken due measures for bringing the delinquents to justice; but would not consent to adopt and extend barbarity, by sacrificing innocence, under the notion of preventing guilt. If violations of humanity could be justified by example, those committed by General Washington's party exceeded and probably gave rise to that in question. The ^{27th April.} board of loyalists, corroborating this assertion, stated circumstances relating to the execution of Huddy, in which, though Lippencott had exceeded his authority, and their orders, he had merely adopted the precedent shewn by the Americans in the case of White. They also recited many instances in which cruelties toward the loyalists had only been restrained by retaliation.

General Washington, however, was not deterred from seizing as deserters Messrs. Hatfield and Badgely, though protected by a flag of truce. To an application for their liberation, he answered, that deserters, or characters whom crime rendered amenable to the civil laws, could not be protected, even under a flag. He announced at the same time, that he had designated a British officer as an object of retaliation for Huddy, and that the time and place of his execution were fixed. ^{5th May.}

Sir Henry Clinton was spared the pain of witnessing the progress of this transaction, by his *récal*, which was solicited by his friends, and, after repeated refusals, at length granted. His whole command had been a succession of disappointments and mortifications; his projects were countenanced, yet unsupported, and his supplies withheld, or sparingly and tardily sent. He sustained no inconsiderable share of the rancour of party, and was undefended, even by those who from principle ought to have been his sup-

*Récal of
Sir Henry
Clinton.*

^c See *Remembrancer*, vol. xiv. p. 155, et seq.

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1782.

7th May.
Proceedings
on the ar-
rival of Sir
Guy Carle-
ton.

9th May.

21st May.

2d Aug.

Discussions
respecting
Captain
Asgill.

porters. Yet he was above the weakness of throwing himself into the arms of faction for the elucidation of misrepresented facts. He received from the King, both through his ministers and in the closet, the fullest approbation of his conduct and plans, and this satisfactory testimonial was the only reward of an arduous and severe struggle.

Sir Guy Carleton, the successor of General Clinton, accompanied the official intelligence of his arrival with the pacific vote of the House of Commons, adding a declaration of his intentions to alleviate as much as possible the horrors of war, and requesting a passport for his aid-de-camp to communicate with congress at Philadelphia. The answer of General Washington was stern and even savage; on the affair of Huddy, he had already expressed his fixed resolution, formed on the most mature deliberation, and from which he would not recede. He refused the passport, and limited admission of flags of truce to one single spot. His conduct was approved by congress, and that body, ^d and several provincial legislatures, as if apprehensive of a schism on the subject of peace, renewed or adopted resolutions against entering into a separate treaty with Great Britain. ^e Sir Guy Carleton, however, laboured to procure a cessation of hostilities, and an exchange of prisoners, even on terms advantageous to the enemy, and when he was empowered to state the commencement of a negotiation with France, his applications ceased to be entirely unsuccessful.

But in the mean time, a more unsatisfactory subject of negotiation claimed his attention. The British officer selected by General Washington as an expiatory victim for Joshua Huddy, was Captain Asgill, son of Sir Charles Asgill, a prisoner under the capitulation of York Town, and only in his nineteenth year. Against the barbarous resolution of Washington, all

^d See Remembrancer, vol. xiv. p. 144.

^e Idem, p. 143. 162.

intreaty and argument were unavailing. Captain As- C H A P.
gill was however rescued from the ignominious fate X L I V.
of André, by the intercession of the Queen of France, 1782.
influenced by the pathetic supplications of the 13th Nov.
captive's mother. General Washington, in obeying
the order of congress to liberate the prisoner, arro-
gated to himself the honour of humanity, declaring,
that in whatever light his agency might be viewed,
he was never influenced by sanguinary motives, but
was now happy in sparing the effusion of innocent
blood.^f

After the great victory of the twelfth of April, Proceedings
the war was not vigorously prosecuted in the West
Indies. Don Juan Manuel de Cagigal, governor of
Cuba, with three frigates and sixty sail of transports,
conveying two thousand five hundred troops, and as
many seamen, fell suddenly on the Bahama islands,
where Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, the governor,
had only a garrison of a hundred and seventy invalids.
The conquest was achieved without bloodshed, and
the captor granted liberal terms of capitulation.

A squadron also sailed from Cape François, con- 31st May.
sisting of a seventy-four, and two frigates of thirty-six
guns, under the command of the since celebrated La
Perouse, which after encountering great difficulties,
and working a perilous passage through the ice, de-
stroyed some defenceless settlements on Hudson's,
Haye's, and Nelson's rivers.

The English captured some forts on the Musquito
shore from the Spaniards, and took from the Dutch,
Acra, on the coast of Africa, with four other forts.

From these minute events our attention is called to
the progress of the war in India, a subject hitherto not
narrated, as too remote from the general scene of mi-
litary operations to involve in its events any conse-
quences materially decisive of the grand contest.
When the delivery of the rescript by the French em-

^f See letters on the subject in the Annual Register, 1783. — Appendix to the Chronicle.

CHAP. bassador, and the evident determination of the court
 XLIV. of France to assist the revolted colonies, rendered
 1782. hostilities certain, the East India company prudently
 Capture of procured the safety of their own settlements by attack-
 French set- tling those of the enemy. The factories of Chander-
 tlements. nagore, Yanam, Carical, and Masulipatam, with sev-
 July. eral ships in the Ganges, and on the coast of Coro-
 mandel, were taken in the beginning of the contest ;
 and ten thousand five hundred troops, of whom
 fifteen hundred were Europeans, were detached from
 Madras, under the command of the brave and expe-
 rienced Major Hector Monro, to form the seige of
 Pondicherry.

August.
 Siege of
 Pondicherry.

Action be-
 tween Ver-
 non and
 Tronjolly.
 10th Aug.

16th Oct.
 Pondicherry
 taken.

Sentiments
 of Hyder
 Ally.

1779.
 Mahé taken.

While the operations were slowly proceeding by land, a sea force, under Sir Edward Vernon, effected the blockade by sea, after a slight and indecisive en- gagement with M. de Tronjolly, who commanded a French squadron of superior strength, but cautiously avoided a close encounter. The defence of the for- tress was ably and resolutely maintained by M. de Bellecombe, governor of the town, and commandant- general of all the French settlements in India. His garrison consisted of nine hundred Europeans, and two thousand one hundred natives, and his loss in killed was nearly equal to that of the besiegers. To save the town from the horrors of a storm, he was obliged to capitulate, and the victor, with humane sensibility, granted terms in which the military pride and personal feelings of the garrison were atten- tively considered. The inhabitants were also allowed great and unusual privileges, which, on a subsequent occasion, they did not hesitate ungratefully to turn against the victors.

The French were always favoured by Hyder Ally, and the war in which he was engaged with the Mah- rattas, alone prevented him from attempting to raise the siege of Pondicherry. In the ensuing year, the settlement of Mahé, the last possession of the French, was captured notwithstanding Hyder's remon-

strances, who alleged, that all foreigners holding factories under his dominion, were entitled to his protection. This annihilation of the power of France in India, was peculiarly auspicious at a moment when the British possessions were exposed to imminent danger from a contest with the native powers. It is not intended at this period to recount the causes and progress of hostilities, but only to observe, that through a combination of Hyder Ally, with the Mahrattas and other native potentates, a general scheme was formed for the expulsion of the British from India. The French, not unmindful of the rising storm, sent great reinforcements to their settlements in Africa, hoping to co-operate with the powers of India against the English; and Hyder Ally, relying on their assistance, and an immense army which he had collected, commenced war in the Carnatic, and though disappointed in the expected co-operation, the treachery of the favoured inhabitants of Pondicherry rendered some service to his cause, by distracting the attention and dividing the efforts of the British government.

The war with Holland gave a more active impulse to European hostility. A secret expedition was equipped, the fleet being commanded by Commodore Johnstone, the land forces by General Meadows, to reduce the Cape of Good Hope. France detached a portion of de Grasse's fleet, under M. de Suffrein, to counteract this enterprise, and reinforce the naval establishment in India. While Commodore Johnstone was victualling and watering at Port Praya, in the Cape de Verd islands, belonging to Portugal, he was suddenly attacked by the French. This act of treachery did not produce the expected effect; the English, though unexpectedly assailed, combated with characteristic spirit, and compelled the enemy to retire with disgrace and disappointment. They gained, however, the advantage of securing the Cape of Good Hope.

By the accidental capture of a Dutch East India-man, the commodore acquired intelligence that five

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XLIV.

1779.

War with
the natives.Efforts of
France.

1780.

1781.
War with
Holland.
Secret expe-
dition.16th April.
Commodore
Johnstone
attacked by
De Suffrein.June.
Five Dutch
East India-
men taken.

C H A P. valuable ships were lying in Saldanha Bay. On his approach, they were set on fire, but the flames being extinguished, four were taken, and the Middleburgh alone destroyed.

XLIV.

1781.

July.

August.
Negapatam
and other
places taken.
21st Oct. to
12th Nov.
Jan. 1782.

Arrival of
the English
squadron.

8th Feb.
15th Feb.
Sir Edward
Hughes
takes six
transports.
16th Feb.

His first en-
gagement
with De
Suffrein.

An expedition hastily formed from Fort Marlborough, on the coast of Sumatra, reduced all the Dutch settlements on that island; Negapatam, in the Tanjore country, was taken after an active siege by Sir Hector Monro; and, early in the ensuing year, Sir Edward Hughes, with a small detachment of sepoys and artillery men, stormed the fort of Trincomalé, on the island of Ceylon.

The arrival of De Suffrein, and the indefatigable exertions of the French, in sending out reinforcements to their African settlements, afforded flattering hopes of crushing the British power. On the return of Commodore Johnstone to Europe, his squadron was committed to Captain Alms, when a tempest separated and disabled several of the ships, and the Hannibal, of fifty guns, fell into the hands of the enemy. The remainder, consisting of the Hero of seventy-four, the Monmouth of sixty-four, and the Isis of fifty guns, joined Sir Edward Hughes in the open road of Madras. M. de Suffrein, unapprized of their arrival, bore down to attack the English fleet, with twelve sail of the line, six frigates and eight large transports, but perceiving their augmented force, stood out to sea, and the English admiral recaptured five English, and took the Lauriston, a French transport of thirteen hundred tons burthen, with a train of artillery, and a large quantity of military stores, thus by one fortunate stroke rendering abortive all the projects for assisting Hyder Ally.

The efforts of De Suffrein to protect his convoy, produced an engagement, which was distinguished only by the gallantry with which five English ships, separated from the rest by the weather, repelled the attack of the whole fleet. After repairing his damaged vessels, and being reinforced by two more from England,

Sir Edward Hughes again encountered the French admiral, on the same day that Rodney gained unfading laurels in the West Indies. This conflict was equally honourable, but less decisive, no ship being captured on either side, and both fleets were compelled to put into port for repairs.

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XLIV.

1782.

12th April.

His second engagement.

Theireffects.

Although these engagements produced no accession to the force of either party at sea, they contributed to make Hyder Ally desirous of peace, as his patience was exhausted by awaiting the delusive promises of France, and his notions of British superiority greatly enhanced by the display of valour and skill in such disproportioned encounters. The French strained every nerve to efface these impressions, by strengthening their force at Cuddalore, on the coast of Coromandel, while the fleet, repaired, re-victualled, newly manned, and augmented, again challenged the British commander to an encounter. Sir Edward Hughes, though inferior in numbers, did not decline the engagement, which was, for the first time, general, and a complete victory was almost gained, when a sudden squall saved the defeated enemy, and enabled them to effect a retreat. The Severe, a French sixty-four, had struck her colours to the Sultan, but taking advantage of the change in the wind, treacherously fired a broadside into the English ship, and rejoined the French fleet without colours flying. This violation of the laws of war was feebly vindicated by De Suffrein, and subsequently by the French government.

Both fleets were again reinforced, and the French retaining a considerable superiority, recaptured Trincomalé.ⁿ Sir Edward Hughes made great exertions for the relief of the fortress, but arrived too late; he fought, however, another engagement with the French admiral; the superior skill of the British fleet more

6th July.
Third engagement.August.
Trincomalé
re-captured.3d Sept.
Fourth engagement.

ⁿ The taking and re-capture of this fort are but briefly noticed here; but the details are worthy of perusal, and may be found in Captain Percival's Account of Ceylon, p. 49.

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XLIV.
1782.

Siege of
Cuddalore.

1783.
25th June.
20th June.
Fifth en-
gagement.

Naval exer-
tions in
Europe.

13th April.
1782.
Sundry
captures.

than counterpoised the difference of force ; the action was unusually bloody, and De Suffrein again owed his safety to flight ; he broke six of his captains and sent them prisoners to Mauritius.

No further transaction of moment occurred between the European powers during the remainder of the year, and their next campaign was chiefly employed in the siege of Cuddalore, which was valiantly defended by the Marquis de Bussy, and assailed with great skill and valour by General Stuart. The English fleet was at this time reduced to a miserable condition by the scurvy, but Sir Edward Hughes did not decline a fifth and last encounter with his old antagonist ; it was fought at a great distance, and, like the preceding, terminated without a capture.¹

The united enemies of Great Britain threatened, by a combination of their marine forces in Europe, to ruin commerce and desolate the country. But these menaces, however loudly sounded, were rendered abortive by the vigilance and valour displayed by the English naval commanders, in preventing the junction of the hostile squadrons. Admiral Barrington, having sailed from Portsmouth with twelve ships of the line, met the French fleet at a small distance from Ushant, commenced a chase, and took twelve transports, with a great number of troops. Captain Jervis, now Earl St. Vincent, in the Foudroyant, of seventy-four guns, encountered le Pegase, of equal force, and after a spirited though short engagement, compelled her to strike. The most remarkable circumstance of the action was the disparity of loss ; the French having more than eighty men killed, while the Foudroyant had only three or four wounded, and not one slain. The prize reduced to a mere wreck, was committed to the charge of Captain Maitland of the Queen, who, in conducting her to England, captured the Action-

¹ For these transactions, I have consulted the *Gazettes*, narratives of officers, and memoirs of the war in Asia.

naire, a sixty-four, but armed *en flute*; conveying a great quantity of naval and ordnance stores, and several chests of money. Captain Jervis was rewarded with the order of the Bath.

Admiral Barrington being obliged by stress of weather to return to port, Admiral Kempenfelt, with nine sail of the line, repaired to the station he had quitted, while Lord Howe, with a squadron of twelve sail, terrified the Dutch into a relinquishment of their designs on the Baltic and northern trade of Great Britain.

Meanwhile, de Guichen had formed a junction at Cadiz with the Spanish fleet, under Don Louis de Cordova; their united squadron, amounting to twenty-five sail of the line, occupied the chops of the Channel, having in their cruize captured eighteen vessels of the outward-bound Quebec and Newfoundland fleets: but Lord Howe being returned from his expedition against the Dutch, accomplished, with only twelve sail of the line, the arduous task of protecting the homeward-bound Jamaica trade; and thus an inferior naval force baffled all the projects of such a mighty combination.

But what the enemy could not effect to the prejudice of the British marine, the elements in their unsparing fury accomplished. Some of the great prizes made by Rodney and Hood on the glorious twelfth and nineteenth of April, were dispatched with English ships to convoy the homeward-bound trade. On this fleet, fell the severest rigours of one of the most tempestuous summers ever experienced. The Ville de Paris, Centaur, Glorieux, Hector, and Ramillies, foundered under different circumstances, and the merchant vessels sustained a proportionate damage. The horror of these misfortunes was aggravated by an accident at home, which roused the sympathies of the nation by a resistless appeal. Lord Howe, returning from his well-conducted cruize against the united fleets, urged with the utmost celerity the

C H A P

XLIV.

1783.

29th May.

1782.

The Dutch confined in port.

Junction of the French and Spanish fleets.

Capture of Quebec and Newfoundland fleets. Trade protected by Lord Howe.

Fate of Rodney's prizes.

20th June

C H A P.

XLIV.

1782.
29th Aug.
Loss of the
Royal
George.

equipment of a squadron for the relief of Gibraltar. The Royal George, of a hundred and eight guns, one of the ships destined for this service, was placed in an inclined position for the purpose of stopping a leak, when a sudden squall of wind intirely overset her, and buried in the ocean the brave veteran, Admiral Kempenfelt, and nearly a thousand sailors, marines, women and children. A victualler which lay alongside, was swallowed up in the vortex occasioned by the submersion of so large a body, and it was some time before the small craft could be employed in assisting those who escaped the general calamity. Not more than three hundred were saved, and the national humanity was honourably displayed by an ample subscription for the relatives of those who perished.

This accident did not, however, impede the preparations for the relief of Gibraltar, the siege of which engaged the attention of all Europe.

1781.
Progress of
the siege of
Gibraltar.

April.
1782.
De Crillon
commands.

For some days after the destruction of their works, by the well-judged sortie in 1781, the Spaniards did not even attempt to extinguish the smoaking ruins, but seemed stupified by surprise. Recovering, however, from their consternation, they laboured with increasing assiduity, and again constructed very formidable approaches. The bombardment continued with various degrees of vigour, and was answered by corresponding efforts from the garrison. But after the capture of Minorca, the duc de Crillon, with twenty thousand French and Spanish troops, joined the besiegers, and assumed the command. The garrison received information of these circumstances, and of the intention of the enemy to make their principal attack by sea, with battering ships of a new construction, calculated to resist the effect of shells, and even of red-hot cannon balls. They displayed no alarm at these tidings, nor at the view of the formidable preparations in the port of Algeziras; confidence and alacrity generally prevailed, and the privates even volunteered extra services to assist the artillery.

corps. In the adverse camp, fear and distrust were diffused, delusive assurances, encouraging promises, threats, and punishments, were insufficient to deter large parties from desertion into the country, and individuals into the garrison. The vigilance and judgment of Elliot pervaded every part of his command, and the confidence of those under him rose in proportion; they sustained with unshaken intrepidity the tremendous and now unceasing cannonade, returning a well-directed fire, which often destroyed the artillery, and demolished some works of the besiegers.

C H A P.

XLIV.

1782.

June.

The duc de Crillon had formerly commanded in the Spanish lines before Gibraltar, and was perfectly acquainted with the state of the garrison; his operations were assisted by M. d'Arçon an able engineer, and Don Juan de Moreno conducted the fleet. The battering ships invented by d'Arçon were vaunted as impregnable and incombustible. They were fortified to the thickness of six or seven feet on the larboard side, with great timbers bolted with iron, cork, junk, and raw hides; they carried guns of heavy metal, and were bomb-proof at the top, the roof being constructed with a descent for the shells to slide off, termed in military phrase, *à dos d'ane*. Ten of these

July.

formidable floating towers the enemy designed to moor within half gun-shot of the walls with iron chains, while large boats, with mantelets formed with hinges to fall down and facilitate landing, were to be placed at a small distance, full of troops, to take advantage of occurrences. Forty thousand men were to be placed in the camp, but the principal attack was to be made by sea, and covered by a squadron of men of war, with bomb-ketches, floating batteries, gun and mortar boats. Such were the preparations on which the enemy fondly relied, and which they loudly boasted were sufficient to beat the fortifications to powder.

For some time after the floating batteries were complete, the grand assault was deferred, the interval

Construc-
tion of float-
ing batteries.Preparations
for defence.

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XLIV.
1782.

4th Sept.

9th & 10th.
Attack by
land.

11th and
12th Sept.

Naval force
of the enemy.

Land force.

being employed in preparing and making additions to the approaches by land. General Elliot was with equal activity engaged in the means of defence, among the most conspicuous of which was a copious distribution of furnaces and grates, for heating cannon balls.^k He had a few days before the decisive assault, a pleasing presage of their general effect, by burning one of the most prominent and best defended works of the besiegers.

This event precipitated the grand attack ; the duke de Crillon, alarmed for the fate of the remaining works, opened his batteries in an unfinished state, and maintained an incessant cannonade from an hundred and seventy pieces of ordnance, of the largest calibre. The ships of war, gun and mortar boats, also annoyed the garrison and the town. In the space of two days, five thousand five hundred and twenty seven shot, and two thousand three hundred and two shells, were expended from the land batteries alone, to which the garrison returned only a few rounds, against working parties employed in repairs.

The next day produced a still more vigorous discharge, and on the ensuing morning, the garrison beheld the combined fleets of France and Spain, anchored in the Bay between the Orange Grove and Algeziras.

The force of the enemy was ostentatiously paraded before the eyes of the garrison, as if intended to unnerve their exertions by terror, and an armament more calculated to produce that effect, was never perhaps drawn forth. Forty-seven sail of the line, ten *invincible* battering ships, carrying two hundred and twelve guns, numerous frigates, xebiques, bomb-ketches, cutters, gun and mortar boats, with smaller craft for the purpose of disembarkation, were assembled in the Bay. On the land side were stupen-

^k In justice to Sir Robert Boyd, it should be commemorated, that the plan of destroying the battering vessels by red-hot shot, originated with him.

dous batteries and works, mounting two hundred pieces of heavy ordnance, and protected by an army of forty thousand men, commanded by a victorious and active general, and animated by the presence of two princes of the blood, a number of officers of the first distinction, and the general expectation of the world.

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1782.

To this prodigious force was opposed a garrison of seven thousand effective men, including the marine brigade, with only eighty cannon, seven mortars, and nine howitzers. A prevalent sense of the importance of the station, and the glory which would redound from the defeat of so powerful a foe, raised enthusiastic ardour; and the encouragement the enemy might derive from acting under the eyes of the offspring of their sovereigns, was more than counter-balanced by the affection which the garrison felt toward those officers, who had so long shared with them every hardship, toil, and privation, and whose affability, moderation, and justice, made all consider themselves a family, a “band of brothers.” They anticipated with animated confidence the arrival of that day which would relieve them from the tedious cruelty of a blockade.

Having made requisite preparations for resistance, General Elliot suffered the battering ships to range themselves in order, the nearest nine hundred, the most remote about twelve hundred yards from the walls. At three quarters after nine o’clock, the cannonade commenced; the enemy were completely moored in less than ten minutes, and the spectators who crowded the neighbouring hills, witnessed a continued discharge on the garrison from four hundred pieces of the heaviest artillery.¹ The battering ships were found to be not less formidable than they were represented. Against them, the garrison directed

13th Sept.
Grand
attack.

¹ The garrison afterwards learned with satisfaction, that at this crisis the Moors at Tangier repaired to their mosques, and offered up fervent supplications for the deliverance of their old allies.

CHAP. their whole exertion, regardless of annoyance from
 XLIV. the land batteries, but they observed with astonish-
 1782. ment that the heaviest shells rebounded from their
 tops, while thirty-two pound shot made no visible im-
 pression on their hulls: a momentary fire was always
 extinguished by the application of water. The dis-
 appointment of their first exertions only stimulated
 the garrison to greater vigour; incessant showers of
 red-hot balls; carcasses, and shells flew from all
 quarters; the masts of several ships were shot away,
 and in the afternoon, the floating batteries began to
 exhibit symptoms, that the skill displayed in their
 construction could not withstand the furious can-
 nonade to which they were exposed. The confusion
 on board the admiral's battering ship and her second,
 and the increasing smoke, demonstrated that com-
 bustion raged unsubdued; in the evening their firing
 was considerably abated, and before eight o'clock it
 had entirely ceased, except from the two remotest
 floating batteries, which had sustained and could ef-
 fect the least injury.

Destruction
of the float-
ing batteries.

During the night, the cannonade from the garri-
 son was also abated, from the necessity of allowing
 repose to the wearied artillery-men, and the impossi-
 bility of directing the guns with certain effect. This
 interval was rendered awful by the signals of distress
 thrown up from the Spanish fleet, and the indistinct
 clamour, the lamentable cries, and agonizing groans
 which proceeded from every quarter. A little before
 midnight a wreck with twelve men, the survivors out
 of threescore, floating in, apprized the garrison that
 they had gained some advantage, but at one o'clock
 they saw with joy the effect of their perseverance,
 and the termination of the hopes of the enemy, in
 the flames which burst at once from every part of the
 admiral's battering ship, while another to the south-
 ward burnt as fatally, though with less fury.

The light of the conflagration enabled the garrison
 to direct their artillery with unerring aim, and the

14th Sept.
Human exer-
tions

calmness of the sea permitted Captain Curtis^m, with his gun-boats, to flank the battering ships, and intercept assistance. At four o'clock, six other floating batteries were in flames; all hope of assisting the sailors was abandoned by the enemy, but British humanity was gloriously exercised in this tremendous crisis. Captain Curtis, with the marine brigade, actively seconded by Captain Sir Charles Knowles of the navy, was indefatigable in his efforts to rescue the miserable wretches, no longer considered as foes, from the dismal alternative of meeting death in flames, or in the waves.

The gallant Curtis exerted his pious bravery till the explosion of a floating battery imminently endangered his own life and those of his followers, and he gained the immortal glory of rescuing from the grasp of death three hundred and forty-five of his fellow-creatures.

The destruction of eight battering ships removed every alarm from the garrison, and hopes were entertained of saving the two which remained, as trophies, but one suddenly burst into flames and blew up, and after a survey, it was found necessary to burn the other.ⁿ The loss of the enemy in killed and prisoners, was calculated at two thousand, while the garrison in so furious an attack, had only one officer, two subalterns, and thirteen privates killed, and five officers and sixty-three privates wounded. The damage sustained by the fortress itself was so small, that the whole sea line was put in serviceable order before night.

The failure of this unparalleled attack drew on those who had so confidently vaunted of certain suc-

C H A P.
XLIV.
1782.
of Captain
Curtis.

^m He received the occasional rank of brigadier.

ⁿ The destruction of these battering ships has been imputed to the thickness of the timber; the red hot balls lodged in the sides, and it was impossible to get at, remove, or quench them. If the sides of the ships had been of the ordinary thickness, and the red-hot shot had passed through, they might not have been burnt.

Public
honours to
the garrison.

C H A P.

XLIV.

1782.

12th and
13th Dec.11th Sep.
Lord Howe
relieves
Gibraltar.
10th Oct.

11th.

Negotia-
tions for
peace.
June.

cess, the ridicule of their own countrymen, as of all other foreign nations, while the applause of Elliot and his brave associates was universally celebrated in a tone so full and clear, as to silence even envy and detraction. The officers and privates of the garrison were gratified with the thanks of parliament ; General Elliot received the Order of the Bath, with which he was invested by deputation on the spot which he had preserved and dignified by his conduct and prowess. He was afterwards raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Heathfield, enriched with a pension, granted by parliament, and his paternal arms were enlarged by adding those of the fortress he had so ably defended.

Two days only before the grand attack, Lord Howe sailed for the relief of Gibraltar with thirty-four ships of the line and some frigates. On his arrival, a tremendous hurricane dispersed the enemy's fleet, and drove on shore, under the guns of Gibraltar, the St. Michael of seventy-four guns, while the British squadron weathered the storm uninjured. The next morning they entered the Straights in line of battle, and landed their stores with fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder. The enemy with sixty-four sail, of which forty-two were of the line, kept in sight of the British fleet for some days, but though they always had the option, no superiority of strength or advantage of wind could tempt them to hazard more than a partial action, and the grand fleet returned safely and prosperously.

The further prosecution of the siege affords no circumstance worthy of particular notice.^o

The success of the British arms had great influence on the negotiations for peace. On the resignation of Mr. Fox and his friends, Mr. Grenville quitted Paris, and the new cabinet appointed Mr. Fitzherbert in his stead. The French ministry, still temporising, deli-

^o From Drinkwater and the Gazettes.

vered only vague and inexplicable proposals, and their C H A P. agents insidiously excited the pride and resentment of XLIV. the imperial courts, on the supposed contempt which Great Britain had shewn toward their mediation. In the course of the summer, however, the failure of the attempts against the prosperity of England in India became apparent. The Empress of Russia was conciliated by reasons assigned for the answer to the *insinuation verbale*; her ambition pointed in a direction remote from the quarrels between Great Britain and the confederate powers; and before the relief of Gibraltar, France began to conduct the negotiation in a manner which promised a favourable conclusion. Her terms, though too lofty for admission, were clear and definitive, and after the failure at Gibraltar, she was earnest in persuading Spain to renounce all hopes of obtaining that fortress by treaty. The French government observed, during the progress of the treaty, a cautious secrecy: their own ambassadors, and even those of the most friendly courts, were excluded from all information.

The first authentic intelligence published on the 22d Nov. subject, was contained in a letter from the secretary of state to the lord mayor of London, in which, for the purpose of preventing speculations in the funds, he announced that the negotiations promised a decisive conclusion, either for peace or war, and that parliament would on that account be prorogued from the twenty-sixth of November, the intended day of meeting, to the fifth of December.

Even at this period, ministers could not form a decisive opinion on the final event. The treaty with France was most advanced, but that crafty power held the ultimate decision in her own hands. If really disposed to make peace, she could influence Spain and Holland; if otherwise, she could throw on them the blame of continuing hostilities. Mr. Fitzherbert succeeded, however, by his ability

September.

1782.

C H A P.

XLIV.

1782.
30th Nov.
Provisional
treaty with
America.
State of
parties.
July.

and judgment, in obtaining from the American commissioners the signature of provisional articles.^p

During the recess of parliament, the efforts of party were exerted with uncommon industry to interest the public in the cause of those who expected or possessed the direction of affairs. The curiosity to ascertain the precise causes of the late surprising change in the cabinet, was only gratified by partial statements and general rumours. Mr. Fox declared in parliament, that he had, some time before the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, resolved to resign, from an impossibility of concurring in the opinions and systems of Lord Shelburne; many complaints were made, though not supported by specific allegations, of the predominating influence of that minister's counsels, which drove his late colleagues from office; but neither the crimination nor the defence of the new cabinet afforded authentic insight into the motives of disunion. The kingdom was divided into three parties, who defended and attacked with equal zeal and acrimony. The acts of the late administration were reviewed with asperity, not more by those who considered their reforms too violent, than by those who had formed exaggerated hopes from their promises, and thought they had not fulfilled the expectations to which they had given birth.^q The sincerity of the ministry in the negotiations for peace was questioned by both parties in opposition, and the adherents of Lord North seemed assured that the collision of opinions, and exposition of the views

^p From correspondence and private information. Mr. Coxe gives the following account of Mr. Fitzherbert's judicious conduct. "Mr. Fitzherbert, who was deputed to Paris in the room of Mr. Grenville, fulfilled his delicate office with great ability and address; while he treated with Vergennes, he succeeded in alarming Franklin, Adams, and Jay, the three American commissioners, and prevailed on them to sign separate and provisional articles, which severed America from France." Coxe's *House of Austria*, vol. ii. p. 603.

^q See particulars of a conversation at the anniversary of Fox's election. Remembrancer, vol. xiv. p. 290.

of those who had excluded him from power, would effect a change in the public opinion beneficial to his fame, and gratifying to their hopes.^r

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^r Gibbon says: a certain late secretary of Ireland, reckons the House of Commons thus: Minister one hundred and forty, Reynard ninety, Bœfeas one hundred and twenty, the rest unknown or uncertain. The last of the three, by self or agents, talks too much of absence, neutrality, moderation. I still think he will discard the game. See Gibbons's miscellaneous Works, vol. i. p. 561.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIFTH :

1782—1783.

Meeting of Parliament. — Debates on the address. — Recess. — Preliminaries of peace signed. — Substance of the treaties. — America. — France. — Spain. — Cessation of hostilities with Holland. — Affairs of Ireland. — Coalition of Lord North with Mr. Fox. — Debates on the preliminaries of peace — which are disapproved by the house of commons. — Resignation of lord Shelburne. — Parliamentary reflections on the coalition. — Sensation of the public. — Ministerial interregnum. — Motions on the subject. — New Ministry. — Commercial intercourse with America regulated. — Debates on the loan and receipt tax. — Economical reforms. — Pitt's motion for a reform of Parliament. — First petition for abolishing the slave trade — Separate establishment of the Prince of Wales. — Close of the session. — General peace.

C H A P.
XLV.
1782.
5th Dec.
Meeting of
parliament.
King's
speech.

ON the day appointed, the King addressed to parliament a speech of uncommon length. He stated his exertions for a general pacification, in pursuit of which he had exercised the powers vested in him by the legislature, and offered to declare the American colonies free and independent states, *by an article to be inserted in the treaty of peace.* “ In thus admitting their separation from the crown of Britain,” he said, I have sacrificed every consideration of my own to the wishes and opinion of my people. I make it my humble and earnest prayer to Almighty God, that Great Britain may not feel the evils which might result from so great a dismemberment of the empire ; and that America may be free from those calamities which have formerly proved in the mother-country how essential monarchy is to the enjoyment of

constitutional liberty. Religion—language—interest—affections, may, and I hope will, yet prove a bond of permanent union between the two countries: to this end, neither attention nor disposition shall be wanting on my part."

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1782.

Among many other topics, the speech mentioned the valiant exertions of the army and navy, the favourable state of the negotiations, the reforms in economy which would be necessary at home, and the attention which must be employed in the government of Ireland and of India.

The address in the House of Commons was moved by Mr. Philip Yorke, and seconded by Mr. Banks. No direct opposition was made; but Mr. Fox objected to the mode of granting American independence, and stated that a difference in opinion with the present ministers on that subject, had induced him to quit the cabinet. He was inclined "to recognize the independence of America in the first instance, and not reserve it as the condition of peace;" Lord Shelburne, he said, had fully, though reluctantly, agreed in this principle; but afterward swerving from it, occasioned the division of the cabinet.

Lord North did not agree with Mr. Fox, that the independency of America ought to be surrendered without an equivalent. The country, he said, was not reduced to the abject situation of accepting such terms of peace, as the enemy might think fit to offer: the House would be unanimous in demanding an honourable peace, or a vigorous war. He would not oppose the address, but reserved the right of objecting to the provisional treaty when produced to parliament.

Mr. Burke decried the speech from the throne as a dangerous species of delusion and insinuation, a collection of unmeaning professions, and of undeserved self-praises; yet he expressed his readiness to thank His Majesty for concluding a provisional agreement which ended the American war.

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1782.
In the
House of
Lords.

In the Upper House, the address also passed without a division ; a slight amendment, proposed by Lord Radnor, acknowledging with gratitude the sacrifice made by His Majesty to the wishes of his people, being unanimously adopted. In the conversation which took place, Lord Stormont vehemently arraigned the irrevocable concession of independence, to American commissioners acting under the inspection and controul of France. Lord Shelburne denied that the proceedings of the American commissioners were so influenced, and affirmed that the offer of independence was not unqualified, unconditional, and irrevocable. If France did not agree to peace, independence would not be granted.

6th Dec.
On the re-
port.

This explanation occasioned severe animadversions, on reporting the address to the Lower House. Several members seemed to repent their vote of the preceding day, and confined their approbation to the grant of American independence. Mr. Burke described the King's speech as a farrago of hypocrisy and nonsense. Mr. Fox declared that he detested and despised it ; but no motion being made, the House was not divided.

11th and
13th Dec.

18th Dec.

Other questions and reflections on American independence, occasioned debates in both Houses, in which duplicity and discordancy of opinion were imputed to ministers ; but no division took place till Mr. Fox moved for copies of such parts of the provisional treaty as related to the recognition of American independence, founding his argument on the diversity of language used by ministers in the various forms of communicating instructions and intelligence.

23d Dec.

Mr. Thomas Pitt moved for the order of the day ; he was supported by Lord North, and the division by which it was carried demonstrated the weakness of the other body of opposition, who could only produce forty-six votes, against two hundred and nineteen. In a few days the House adjourned for the Christmas recess.

During this interval the preliminaries of peace CHAP.
were executed by France and Spain.

America gained by her treaty a full recognition of the thirteen provinces as free, sovereign and independent states. The boundaries of their territory were accurately, and, for America, advantageously settled. The people had liberty to take fish on all the banks of Newfoundland, but not to dry or cure them in any of His Majesty's settled dominions in America; and the navigation of the Mississippi, from its source to the ocean, was free to both parties.

It was also agreed that congress should *recommend* to the legislatures of the respective states, to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights, and properties belonging to real British subjects, and to persons resident in districts in the King's possession, who had not borne arms against them. All other persons were at liberty to remain a year in any of the provinces, for the purpose of obtaining their confiscated estates, congress *recommending* to the several legislatures, a consideration or revision of the laws of forfeiture, and a restitution of property, on payment, by the dispossessed proprietors, of the sums for which it had been sold to others. No future confiscations were to be made, or prosecutions commenced; but all prisoners, military and political, to be liberated.

By the treaty with France, the right of that nation France. to fish at Newfoundland, and the gulph of St. Lawrence, was re-established on the same footing as in the treaties of Utrecht and Paris, except that, for the prevention of disputes, the limits were more accurately defined and restrained. St. Pierre and Miquelon were surrendered to France.

In the West Indies, Great Britain restored St. Lucie, and ceded Tobago; and France restored Grenada, with its dependencies, St. Vincent's, Dominica, St. Christopher's, Nevis, and Montserrat.

XLV.
1782.
20th Jan.
1783.
Preliminaries signed.
Substance of the treaty with America:

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1783.

Great Britain ceded to France the river of Senegal in Africa, with its dependencies and forts, and the Island of Goree; retaining the possession of Fort James, and the river Gambia.

The French regained all their establishments in Orissa and Bengal, with liberty to make a ditch round Chandernagore, and security for prosecuting their accustomed commerce either by a company or individuals. Pondicherry and Carical were restored, with the reservation of a right to certain circumjacent dependencies. The French also regained Mahé and the Comptoir of Surat, with liberty of commerce in that part of India.

Great Britain abrogated and suppressed all articles in the treaty of Utrecht relative to the demolition of Dunkirk.

Spain.

The treaty with Spain comprised but few objects: Minorca and East Florida were ceded by Great Britain, and the Catholic King retained West Florida, but guaranteed the unmolested right of cutting logwood in the bay of Honduras, and restored Providence and the Bahama islands.^a

Truce with Holland.

Holland also agreed to a cessation of hostilities; but the preliminaries with that power were not yet arranged.

Affairs of Ireland.

Although the public attention was chiefly absorbed by the terms on which peace was obtained, another object first claimed the interference of parliament. Since the repeal of the declaratory act of George I. the Irish had been instigated to insist on further concessions, and cavil at the restrictions supposed to be implied in the last. When the abrogation of that act was proposed, Mr. Flood insisted that the British government did not disclaim the principle on which it was founded, the renunciation of which was necessary. Along altercation ensued between him and Mr. Grattan, who had pledged himself to the English

^a See the preliminary treaties, and provisional articles, in the *Débates*, and the *Annual Register* for 1782. The Bahamas were recaptured before the execution of the treaty.

ministry that a simple repeal would be sufficient. The contest did not much agitate the public mind, but the popular opinion, though at first agreeing with that of Mr. Grattan, afterward inclined in favour of Mr. Flood's doctrines. The question, however, subsided; but Lord Temple, who succeeded the Duke of Portland, during whose administration the discussion arose, thought it right that it should be settled in the most decisive manner, and recommended a bill of renunciation. The King mentioned the affairs of Ireland in the speech from the throne, and before the recess, Colonel Fitzpatrick required the immediate attention of ministers to the insufficiency of the repealing act. He founded his application on a decision of the court of King's Bench in England, on a long depending writ of error, brought before the repeal of the statute of George I. which the court had been obliged by the course of legal proceeding to determine, but which served as a theme for popular animadversion.

On the first day of transacting business after the recess, Mr. Townshend, the secretary of state, moved for leave to bring in a bill for removing doubts concerning the legislative rights of the parliament and courts of Ireland, and preventing the adjudication of any writ of error or appeal from that kingdom in the courts of Great Britain. The debate which ensued did not originate in any opposition to the motion, but in the desire of many members to explain their political sentiments respecting Ireland, and the conduct of the preceding and present administrations, which had given vigour to discontent, and rendered the people of that country incapable of being satisfied with moderate concessions. The debates in the subsequent stages of the bill were animated, and involved a discussion, whether treasons committed in Ireland could be tried in Great Britain, under the statute of Henry VIII. the prevailing opinion was in favour of the affirmative, that law having been confirmed by an Irish statute, and the bill passed.

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XLV.
1783.

19th Dec.

22d Jan.
1783.

19th Feb.
and 5th
March.

C H A P.

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1783.

4th Mar.

14th Apr.

24th Jan.

to 17th

February.

Preliminaries laid

before par-

liamēnt.

Coalition

between

Lord North

and Mr.

Fox.

30th Dec.

1782.

Debates on
the peace.

Before its arrival in the Upper House, Mr. Townshend was created a peer, by the title of Lord Sydney, and again appeared the promoter of the measure. A long and acrimonious debate was maintained on the second reading, but it passed without a division.

When the preliminary and provisional articles of peace were submitted to both Houses, and every day produced queries or observations which shewed the utmost anxiety for discussion, a new political arrangement materially affected the state of parties. While those who were attached to the opinions and principles of the ministry, of Lord North, and of Mr. Fox, were separate, the affairs of government could not be efficiently conducted. The terms of peace were likely to produce great diversities of opinion ; and unless the cabinet was strengthened by an alliance with one of the opposition parties, they could not hope to maintain their situations. Lord Keppel had retired with disgust in the course of the negotiation, and was succeeded by Lord Hawke ; but it was apparent, that among the remaining members of administration, some entertained political opinions hostile to their colleagues. The most natural association was a re-union of the ministry with those who had lately seceded, and overtures for that purpose were made to Mr. Fox : but in his bosom indignation against Lord Shelburne was more lively than against Lord North, to whom he had made advances for reconciliation. When, therefore, a proposition was conveyed to him from Lord Shelburne, to accept an official situation, he peremptorily refused it, when told that Lord North was to be excluded. The ministry were therefore prepared for a new and strenuous opposition in discussing the treaties ; but the public, unapprized of the arrangement, were left open to every impression which wonder and prejudice could excite.

Although on the day appointed for debating the preliminary articles, no call of the House was ordered,

upward of two hundred and fifty members attended. The address was moved by Mr. Thomas Pitt, and seconded by Mr. Wilberforce. Two amendments were proposed; the one by Lord John Cavendish, reserving to the House a power of disapproving the terms; the other by Lord North expressing the regard of parliament for the loyalists; but both amendments concurred in maintaining inviolate the articles for which the public faith was pledged.

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XLV.
1783.

In support of the original address it was urged that the question should be reduced to this point; whether such a peace as the ministry had made, was preferable to the war in which they found the country involved? The interest of the public debt was increased from four millions and a half to nine millions and a half, and a permanent burden was entailed on the land equal to ten shillings in the pound. At the close of the last war, the necessity of peace was supported by the wisest authorities, and their arguments would be much more applicable to the present period. For a peace so necessary we paid to France and Spain, one small island in the West Indies, the two Floridas, Minorca dismantled, and therefore useless, and some immaterial advantages in fishery, and East India settlements. Less it could not be supposed they would exact, considering the humiliating terms imposed on them in 1762. Independence to America was no concession, since Great Britain could not deprive her of it, and the House had in the last session precluded every such attempt; the extension of their boundary was to us no disadvantage; but the limits were well chosen in the lakes and rivers, for the prevention of future contests. We were without an ally, and had knocked for peace at every door; the present terms could not be censured, unless it were proved that the difference between them, and those which we had a right to expect, was equivalent to the expence of sixteen or twenty millions, the charge of another year's contest. Sufficient was still left to render the country

CHAP. great and flourishing ; but if the treaties did not receive the sanction of parliament, no future administration could make such a peace, as the necessities of the country might require.

XLV.

1783.

The advocates of the amendments argued, that the true question to be discussed, was not whether the peace was preferable to the war ; but whether, under the present circumstances, a better peace could not have been obtained ? And to this they would answer, a worse could not have been concluded. It beggared all the treaties that ever had existed in infamy and disgrace, and rendered all quarters of the globe witnesses of the dismemberment and disunion of the British empire. From a perusal of the various articles it would appear to be a peace patched up for the present, rather than one which promised permanence ; for the preamble of each treaty compared with the articles seemed not to have been penned at the same time, or dictated by any concurrence or congeniality of sentiment. Mr. Fox in particular challenged the cabinet ministers to produce, or authorize him to produce the peace he had projected ; it was in the office, and if it could be exhibited to his disadvantage, he was content to be considered as a man capable of advising a worse peace than the present.

In an able analysis of the treaties, Lord North observed, that the permission to fortify St. Pierre and Miquelon, had been carefully avoided on all former occasions ; it would materially affect the Newfoundland fishery, and enable France to carry it on, even in time of war. The importance of St. Lucie was proved by the cession of five conquered islands as an equivalent. In Africa, Great Britain had restored all ; and in India, the French were reinstated in their former establishments, with many unusual advantages. And although Dunkirk was no longer to be held in the same estimation as it was considered by the framers of the peace of Utrecht, still the restraint on France was honourable to Great Britain, and the abrogation

of former treaties impolitic if not unnecessary. To C H A P. keep an English commissary on the territories of an enemy, for the purpose of reporting and preventing the erection of walls or fortifications, or even the cleaning of an harbour for the admission of ships exceeding a certain burden, perpetuated the former victories, and exalted the present power of Great Britain, while it debased the dignity of the French. They had not, it was true, fortified Dunkirk during the war, because they had been obliged, at the conclusion of every former peace, to destroy fortifications, and had learnt by experience to avoid unavailing expence ; but in a future contest, Great Britain would experience all the evils which rendered the demolition of Dunkirk necessary.

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1783.

Lord North considered the cession of Minorca to Spain unfortunate, that of East Florida improvident ; as it was rendered of additional value since the loss of West Florida. The permission to cut logwood, was a nugatory stipulation, as no district was assigned. The Bahama islands were not comparable in value to the Florida lost, and the Florida ceded, as they afforded such abundant means of annoying the Jamaica trade. Minorca was of more value than even the impregnable Gibraltar ; on account of its harbours, climate, and excellent water for shipping. By the cession of the Floridas and Minorca, we had given to Spain security for her commerce, particularly the gold trade, and the means of enfeebling our own.

In his objections to the provisional articles with America, Lord North was joined by many other members. The preamble of the treaty declared reciprocal advantage and mutual convenience to be its basis ; but it contained the most important concessions on our part, without the smallest balance or equipoise to support the boasted reciprocity. If necessity compelled us to accept terms so disgraceful, the mention of reciprocity was a wanton addition of insult to injury.

The boundaries were not only new in their nature,

C H A P. but so generous in their principle, that the Americans
X L V. acquired a tract including twenty-four Indian nations
1783. in Nova Scotia and Canada, a tract where many forts
had been erected and retained at a vast expence. The
boundary designated in the statute book, by the
Quebec act, would, by keeping the Americans at a
distance, have preserved the permanence of friendship,
but by the present boundary, they could approach
within twenty-four miles of Montreal. As if naked
independence was not a sufficient proof of liberality,
ministry had clothed it with the warm covering of
the fur trade, and besides Charlestown, New York,
Long Island, and Penobscot, had surrendered all
the valuable forts in the back settlements.

In the spirit of pretended reciprocity, we had given
the Americans an unlimited right to fish in Newfound-
land, and the gulph of St. Lawrence, even in the
parts resorted to by British fishermen; but as if
every stipulation of apparent advantage to Great
Britain had been studiously avoided, we had not
contracted for the right of fishing on any of their
coasts, or in any of their bays or creeks. How
could they claim, or we grant such a right after the
establishment of independency had separated them
from the sovereignty of Great Britain?

Even in smaller objects reciprocity seemed a mere
mockery: we were to withdraw our fleets and armies,
and evacuate the American states; prisoners on both
sides were to be liberated, and we to yield up the
American fortifications with the American artillery,
but no covenant was reserved for restoring to Great
Britain, British artillery. The pretended right of
navigating the Mississippi, was entirely delusive. We
were excluded by the Northern boundary; the Amer-
icans possessed the East; the West had been ceded
by the peace of Paris to the French, who had since
granted it to Spain, and by the present treaty, that
power obtained each shore at its mouth. Where then
was this navigation so free and open to commence?

Or what possession of it could Great Britain ever acquire, except the nomination in the treaty ?

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The situation of the loyalists and inhabitants of East Florida was descanted on with peculiar force. The abandonment of those unfortunate men, without reservation of their civil and religious rights, to an incensed and vengeful power, was horrible and disgraceful ; never were the honour, humanity, principles, and policy of a nation so grossly abused. The degradation of sending unmanly petitions from government to congress, on behalf of the wretched loyalists, was equalled only by the infamy of unconditionally assigning over the loyal inhabitants of Florida.

It might be urged that Parliament, in declaring the Americans independent, had made the peace, and were therefore responsible for any improper concessions or restorations ; but Parliament did not give instructions for the cession of Charlestown, New York, Penobscot, Rhode Island, Detroit, and the fisheries. Parliament did not order the desertion of the loyalists ; Parliament had not given countenance to those acts ; and therefore not they, but the ministers, were accountable to the people.

In reply it was observed, that the clamours against the treaties were loud in proportion to their injustice ; as men in general when they complain without cause, complain without temper. On a candid consideration of the circumstances of the country, the peace would be found as good as we had a right to expect, and one that promised permanence. The fortification of St. Pierre and Miquelon had been declared by the most judicious officers a measure which could give no just cause of apprehension. The position assigned for the French fishery at Newfoundland was less advantageous than they held before ; and their greater distance from the British fisheries rendered disputes less probable. The restoration of St. Lucie, and other cessions in the West Indies and Africa, were justified on pleas of propriety or necessity ; and those in India

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were made under the cognizance, and with the consent of the East India company. This fact was uncontestedly proved by Sir Henry Fletcher, one of the secret committee of directors, who declared that the terms comprised in the articles of peace, were unanimously approved by that committee at the India house, and in an able speech specifically defended them.

With respect to America, the House was reminded that a resolution of last year had put a padlock on the British sword. The bill enabling His Majesty to grant independence had pointed out the path to peace; and as it was obviously the interest of Great Britain to establish as close a commercial union as possible with the United States, it would have been illiberal and impolitic to withhold any thing which they might reasonably expect. Far from agreeing that the Americans, by ceasing to be British subjects, had lost all right to the fisheries, it was the wish of ministers to make no such distinctions, but consider the Americans as brethren: and leave them no cause to regret that they were not British subjects. Their fishing terminated before ours began, and it would not be possible to prevent their full use of the right without maintaining a squadron continually on that station.

The assignment of boundaries was defended on principles of nature and policy: by their charters, several provinces had various degrees of extent northward, particularly Virginia; and the line drawn in the statute book for Canada, had been one cause of the American discontents, which it was surely not our interest to revive. The fur trade was at best a matter relating to individuals only, and private considerations must give place to public good; but in fact enough of Canada was retained to afford ample scope for that commerce. The forts, about the surrender of which so much had been advanced, were improvidently built in situations where blockhouses or abbatis would have answered every purpose; and for Detroit, another

chief fort might, at a small expence, be erected on C H A P.
the other side of the river.

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Ministers were not less affected than other individuals at the condition of the loyalists ; but the utmost concession had been obtained for them, which could be insisted on, without foregoing all hopes of peace. If the recommendation of congress to the American states should be unsuccessful, government would be in honour bound to afford the sufferers a compensation. But on the other hand, the article which permitted the uninterrupted recovery of debts, was highly beneficial to Great Britain^b ; and Mr. Dundas declared that the merchants of Glasgow, to whom a full third, if not two-thirds of the American debts were due, had transmitted their thanks to ministers for the stipulation.

At half past seven o'clock in the morning, the amendments were carried by a majority of sixteen.^c

In the House of Lords the Earl of Carlisle moved an amendment similar to that of Lord North. The debate was long, and replete with personality ; but the attack and defence of the treaties was not distinguished by any particular variation from those in the Lower House. In answer to an assertion, that the recommendation of congress in behalf of the loyalists might be crowned with success, Lord Sackville read a resolution of the legislature of Virginia, made in consequence of the provisional treaty, declaring all demands or requests of the British court for the restitution of confiscated property, unsupported by law, equity, or policy, and inadmissible. The amendment was, however, rejected.^d

The united parties, now currently known by the title of the *coalition*, followed their victory by producing, through Lord John Cavendish, a series of re-

Debates in
the House of
Lords.

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Resolutions
condemning
the peace.

^b The fallacy of this argument has been completely proved.

^c 224 to 208. (See note to page 476.)

^d 72 to 59.

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XLV. to preserve the peace inviolate, but declaring the
1783. concessions to the adversaries of Great Britain, more
than they were entitled to claim from their individual or relative strength.

A long and animated discussion ensued, in which the public heard with surprize, those who during the war had been most eloquent in describing the reduced condition of Great Britain, and the inexhaustible strength and resources of the enemy, adopt a language diametrically opposite. Lord John Cavendish decried the gloomy imaginations of those who could continually brood over our own losses, misfortunes, debts, and disgraces, without taking a comparative view of the enemy. They were not less defective in finance than we ; nay, it was a question if they could find resources for another campaign ; Spain had exhausted her treasury in the unsuccessful attack on Gibraltar ; America could only be formidable while Great Britain employed armies on the continent of America ; Holland was not in circumstances to claim sacrifices ; and France was equally, if not more distressed than ourselves. Mr. Fox adopted the same line of reasoning, and contended that France never supported a war with more difficulty ; Spain was nearly bankrupt, and America in a state of national poverty. Lord North, with more consistency, urged similar topics, particularly with respect to America, contending, that if congress could not raise money for the maintenance of war in their own country, Great Britain had nothing to fear from their external efforts ; and ministers might, without danger of prolonging hostilities, have urged with more firmness the cause of the unfortunate loyalists. In most of the states, he said, the people had refused to pay the tax levied by congress for support of the war. In Rhode Island, the tax-gatherers were driven away by popular insurrection, and in Massachuset's, the tax was discounted within

the province, and never carried to the public account. The resolution, expressing censure on the ministers, was carried by a majority of seventeen.^e

This contest decided the fate of administration. Lord Shelburne resigned his office though a successor was not immediately appointed: nor did other members of the cabinet immediately follow his example. The character and conduct of Lord Shelburne were vehemently attacked during the late debates, and he seemed abandoned to these assaults without a defender in the Lower House, except Mr. Pitt, who, in the course of an eloquent speech, pronounced on him a warm and pathetic eulogy. That noble earl, like every other man of eminent ability, acting in the first department of a great state, was liable, he said, to the envy of some, as well as the admiration of others. The obloquy, to which his capacity and situation had raised him, was created and circulated with equal meanness and address; but his merits were as much above panegyric, as the arts to which he owed his defamation were beneath attention. When, strip of power and emolument, he should once more descend into private life, the official superiority which irritated the feelings of his opponents, and that capacity of conferring favours which all men were fond of possessing, would not be obstacles to a just estimate of his character. He would retire firm in the dignity of his own mind, conscious of having contributed to the public advantage; and, if not attended with the fulsome plaudits of a mob, possessed of that substantial and permanent satisfaction which arises from the habitual approbation of an upright mind. To this transcendent consolation he had a title, which no accident could invalidate or affect; he had earned it dearly; and with such a solid understanding, and so much goodness of heart, as stamped his character, he was in no danger of losing it.

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Resignation
of Lord
Shelburne.

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Of his own approaching retirement, Mr. Pitt spoke with equal dignity; he had never, he said, been eager to gain, nor should he feel great reluctance at foregoing official advancement. He never had a wish that did not terminate in the dearest interest of the public; but he would confess, he had also his portion of ambition. High situation and great influence were desirable to most men; and far from being ashamed to pursue, he was solicitous to possess them when they could be acquired with honour, and retained with dignity. On these respectable conditions, he was not less ambitious to be great and powerful, than it was natural for men to be who had such brilliant examples. But even these objects he could relinquish, when his duty, his country, his character, or his friends, rendered the sacrifice indispensable: he then should retire not disappointed, but triumphant. He might be divested of the privileges and emoluments of place; but could not be deprived of those habitual and warm regards for the prosperity of Great Britain, which constituted the happiness and pride of his life, and which death only could extinguish. "With this consolation," he added, "though I affect not to despise, I hope soon to forget the loss of power, and the want of fortune."

*Laudo manentem; si celeres quatit
Pennas, resigno que dedit* —

— *Probamque.*
Pauperiem sine dote quero.

Parliamen-
tary reflec-
tions on the
coalition.
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The coalition, though triumphant in a confirmed majority, did not obtain their conquest without many severe animadversions, which called forth all their abilities in vindication of their conduct. Mr. Powys said, the present era was remarkable for strange confederacies; great and arbitrary despots stood forth the protectors of an infant republic, and in that House, the lofty and strenuous assertors of regal prerogative, united in alliance with the humble worshippers of the majesty of the people, the most deter-

mined advocate of the influence of the crown, might be seen hand in hand with the great purifier of the constitution. Mr. Dundas also spoke in ludicrous ridicule, as well as pointed reprobation of the coalition, which was defended with great humour by Mr. Burke, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Lee; they displayed the heterogeneous composition of the ministry, derided the lord advocate for seating himself between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Thomas Townshend, his constant opponents, and reproached him for his early desertion of his old colleague Lord North.

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Mr. Fox defended the coalition on more broad and liberal grounds. If men of honour, he said, could concur in points of great national concern, he saw no reason for calling such an event an unnatural junction. It was neither wise nor noble to maintain eternal animosities; nor was it just or candid to retain enmity, when the cause had ceased. The American war caused the hostility between him and Lord North, that being terminated, it became wise and candid to terminate also the ill-will, the animosity, the feuds, and the rancour it had occasioned. "When I was the friend of Lord North," he continued, "I found him open and sincere; when the enemy, honourable and manly; he never practised those subterfuges, tricks, and stratagems, those behind-hand paltry manœuvres, which destroy confidence between human beings, and degrade the character of the statesman and the man. It is not in my nature to bear malice, or live in ill-will; my friendships are perpetual, my enmities not so: *amicitiæ sempiternæ, inimicitiæ placabiles.*"

Renewed attacks from Mr. Powys, Mr. Pitt, and Sir Cecil Wray, drew forth, in an ensuing debate, more explicit and detailed vindications. Lord John Cavendish cited as a precedent, the famous coalition of parties in 1757, which rescued the country from the calamities of fluctuating counsels, and carried it to an unexampled pitch of glory. He avowed with

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pride that he was one of the authors of the present union, which he considered essential to the salvation of the country. Mr. Fox repeated his former arguments, adding, that the coalition had arisen only from the necessity of uniting to preserve the constitutional vigour of the state from debility.

Lord North, before he entered into a defence of the coalition, vindicated his own character against some members who asserted, that he was indebted only to an excess of lenity in his late opponents for his personal safety. He reminded them that he had never abandoned his character, connexions, or political principles; he had ever been willing fairly and honourably to meet the most scrupulous inquiry into the minutest actions of his life, and was now ready to bid defiance to every species of investigation. Conscious of innocence, he was under no apprehension of incurring censure, or deserving punishment. In the coalition, he saw nothing surprising. Lord John Cavendish had uniformly displayed an amiable and upright character, patriotic and disinterested principles, and a manly and engaging disposition. Differences of opinion had arisen respecting measures, which though well intended had unquestionably proved calamitous; but there were times and circumstances, and emergencies, when all honourable men should relinquish personal feuds and party animosities, to unite in generous exertions for the common interest. "It is also true, he said, "that Mr. Fox, when warm in the cause he espoused, has not unfrequently made me the butt of those inexhaustible powers of asperity, which so eminently distinguish his eloquence, but he never charged me with want of integrity. In the early part of his career I knew him open, manly, and sincere, his temper was warm, but his nature generous, and while I admire the vast extent of his understanding, I can rely on the goodness of his heart. As an enemy, I have always found him formidable, but in proportion as I had reason to dread him, while our prin-

ciples were adverse, I anticipate greater prospect of success now that we unite with one mind and one heart in the cause of our country. And let me hail it as an auspicious circumstance in favour of our country, that those who were divided by her hostilities, are cemented by her peace."

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In parliament such arguments as these might have produced their desired effect: coalitions of political leaders, who had not been less violent in mutual opposition than Lord North and Mr. Fox, were not unprecedented, nor even uncommon; and the judgment on the coalition would have been referred, as all such transactions should be, not to causes but effects. If two statesmen, from a situation of hostile exasperation, had formed an amicable union even for mere purposes of ambition, without a pretence to public spirit, it could not operate as a just motive for their instantaneous condamnation. A jealous vigilance might be reasonably exercised, and their actions scrutinized with scrupulous strictness, but their conduct in office or in opposition, and not their conjunction, should form the theme of censure. Such is the liberal manner of considering such an event; so had former transactions of similar tendency been considered; and the same candour would probably have been extended to the present case, had not the parties in opposition to Lord North totally altered the frame of the public mind on such topics. Formed themselves of heterogeneous and contending bodies, the residue of all parties and connexions, their alarms were always excited by mutual jealousy and want of confidence. None trusted in the firmness of his associates; but all were apprehensive that on a proper invitation, those with whom they were rather combined than connected, would desert their cause and unite with the ministry. Hence every intimation of the necessity of union among public men, was received with violent resentment by the opposition; and those who acquired, or were suspected of an intention to obtain situations

Sensation
of the
public.

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under government, were assailed with clamorous invectives, as betrayers of public principle, and deserters from the cause of the country. Mr. Fox in particular, had expressed those sentiments with the warmth which marked his character; and for which, though allowances might be made by men of discernment, they could not be obtained from the public, who were constantly reminded of every rash or exaggerated expression, which the heat of debate, or the necessity of giving confidence to political union, might have engendered. The public had been made arbiters in every political dispute; to them were referred the characters, connexions, and motives of statesmen, and their observations were often directed to those when measures or systems alone should have engaged their attention.

It was not therefore a difficult task to excite a loud and incessant clamour against the late monstrous (as it was called) coalition. All the vehicles of slander were employed to diffuse a hatred, horror, and contempt of the two parties; every unfavourable impression, which had been made current against Lord North, was revived, and every adverse declaration of Mr. Fox ostentatiously displayed. In no action of his life had Mr. Fox displayed more greatness of mind, and less discernment, than in the coalition. The small number of his adherents afforded him little hope of a speedy return to power; but the vast extent of his popularity, the lustre reflected on his character by his late magnanimous resignation, and the unpopularity of Lord Shelburne, rendered him more formidable as an opponent than any other individual in the kingdom. It could hardly escape his penetration, that advantage would be taken of his intemperate declarations in parliament while Lord North was minister, to sully the coalition: but perhaps he relied with too much confidence on his own powers, or on the predilection of the people, to think that such efforts would be attended with permanent success. Of the momentary disposition of the public, he had a mortifying

sample at a public meeting of the electors of Westminister, where his conduct was investigated with uncommon severity, and notwithstanding an eloquent defence by himself, and the labours of many of his friends, a vote, approving his general public conduct, was obtained with difficulty, and another in the same words was passed in favour of Sir Cecil Wray, the distinguished opponent of the coalition.¹

Lord North made still greater sacrifices than Mr. Fox. His personal character was daily triumphing over the calumnies advanced against him while in office, and the number of his adherents was daily augmenting. He held the balance of political power; he received applications from both sides, but made none. He was sensible that he would maintain a more exalted political situation by remaining unconnected with either of the other parties, but he perceived that government exposed to the mischiefs of a double opposition, distracted in its operations at so critical a period, and impeded in its progress toward the restoration of calm and regularity, would cease to be efficient or respectable. He sacrificed, therefore, his private wishes, and acceded to proposals, which tendered the smallest hopes of advantage, accompanied with the greatest portion of inevitable obloquy.

The violence which prevailed in appeals to the public, prevailed all societies, and occasioned an uncommon ferment throughout the nation. The first lord of the treasury had resigned, and the other members of administration declared they only retained their situations till a new cabinet could be formed; but the arrangements were so beset with difficulties, that days and weeks elapsed without terminating the solicitude of the public. At an important and eventful crisis, the kingdom was left without an efficient or responsible administration; while confusion and discord bore sad testimony of the misery of

Ministerial
interreg-
num.

¹ See the proceedings in the Remembrancer, vol. xv. p. 205.

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25th Feb.

28th Feb.

18th Mar.

Motions on

the subject.

24th Mar.

that unconstitutional state, which in the language of the day was termed a ministerial interregnum. Four days after the censure of the House of Commons on the articles of peace, Mr. Dundas moved an adjournment for three days, to afford time for completing the new cabinet ; the motion was granted, but when the House re-assembled, the subject was not mentioned.

After a long procrastination, Mr. Coke, member for Norfolk, gave notice that, unless an administration was formed in three days, he would propose an address to the King. He was induced to postpone his intention ; but at length, in an unusually full House, he moved a request that His Majesty would consider the distracted and unsettled state of the empire, and comply with the wishes of the House, by forming an administration entitled to the confidence of the people, and such as might tend to terminate the unfortunate divisions and distractions of the country. In a long and vehement debate, the state of parties was discussed, the coalition reprobated and defended, and this motion censured by some as an invasion of the royal prerogative. The imputation of secret influence was revived, and directly applied to Mr. Jenkinson, who made an able and candid reply. The prerogative of the crown, he said, was not so limited as to proscribe any privy-councillor from the presence of his sovereign ; no secret influence had ever existed ; but when the King was graciously pleased to require his attendance he was obliged to obey the summons. He had more than once in the last five weeks been with His Majesty, but never went, except on official business, and when expressly required. The idea of secret influence was a popular trap for the multitude ; it existed only in imagination, and was brought forward for political purposes. He appealed to Lord North, with whom he had the honour of serving ten years, whether the secret influence so insidiously hinted at ever had existence ; he claimed an explicit declaration, and from a well-founded confidence in

his lordship's innate principles of honour, would abide by his determination. Lord Thurlow, who was also alluded to as one of the secret advisers, was equally exculpated by Mr. Jenkinson.

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Lord North answered this appeal with his usual integrity and candour, disdaining to swell the popular cry against an opponent by false or equivocal statements, he owned, that during his administration, he had never found any secret influence lurking behind the throne which frustrated his intentions. He had often received advice from Mr. Jenkinson, but never knew that he gave counsel to his sovereign which he could not publicly justify. He extended similar testimony to Lord Thurlow, declaring that he had always found him an able, honest, and upright man, and believed him worthy of the office he filled. The motion was carried with only four dissentient voices.

The King returned a gracious answer to the address; but the difficulties which impeded the arrangement were not yet obviated, and the Earl of Surrey moved a resolution, declaring the interposition of the House necessary on this alarming crisis. Mr. Pitt reprobated the proposal, as conveying a disrespectful reflection on the King's promise; Lord John Cavendish and Lord North also declaring disapprobation, Lord Surrey withdrew it, substituting a motion for an address, declaring that delay in a matter so momentous as forming an administration, would tend to weaken the authority of government, retard pacific arrangements, and perpetuate distress and confusion. An acrimonious debate ensued, in which Mr. Dundas insinuated, that the chancellor of the exchequer having that day resigned his situation, no further difficulties would arise. Mr. Pitt had always declared that he only retained his office till a successor could be nominated; and it would not have been repugnant to the wishes of any party that he should retain his place, could other consistent arrangements have been perfected.

27th Mar.

31st.

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1783.
2d April.
New minis-
try.

The motion was withheld from a decision, and a new administration was soon announced to the house. The cabinet was composed of the Duke of Portland, first lord of the treasury, Lord North and Mr. Fox secretaries of state, Lord John Cavendish chancellor of the exchequer, Lord Keppel first lord of the admiralty, Lord Stormont president of the council, and the Earl of Carlisle lord privy seal.

The great seal was given in commission to Lord Loughborough, Mr. Justice Ashurst, and Mr. Baron Hotham^g; and Lord Mansfield was appointed speaker of the House of Lords. Lord Viscount Townshend was master-general, Mr. Courtenay surveyor-general, and Mr. Adam treasurer of the ordnance; Colonel Fitzpatrick secretary at war; Mr. Burke paymaster of the forces, and Mr. Charles Townshend treasurer of the navy. Lord Sandwich accepted the rangership of St. James's and Hyde Parks, the Earl of Cholmondeley was appointed captain of the yeomen of the guards, the Earl of Jersey captain of the band of pensioners, and Lord Hinchingbrooke master of the buck-hounds, Mr. Wallace and Mr. Lee regained the offices of attorney and solicitor-general, Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Richard Burke were secretaries to the treasury, and the honourable Mr. St. John and Colonel North under-secretaries of state. The vice-royalty of Ireland was conferred on the Earl of Northington, Mr. William Windham was appointed secretary, and Mr. Eden vice-treasurer of that kingdom.

Commercial
intercourse
with Ame-
rica regu-
lated.

28th Jan.

One of the most interesting objects, the decision on which seemed partly suspended during the late ministerial interregnum, was the establishment of a commercial intercourse with America. This subject claimed the early attention of the legislature. Mr. Hartley having, on the day after the provisional articles were submitted to the House, recommended an instant repeal of the restraining act, but however

^g The Duke of Richmond made a motion, 3d June to declare the appointment of Judges to act as commissioners of the great seal, an infringement of the 13th of William III.; which after a long debate was rejected without a division.

pressing the consideration of the subject might seem, the most eminent orators in parliament did not appear to have formed a just and well-founded system. They rather evinced a readiness to risque the whole commercial welfare of the kingdom, for the sake of securing a preference in the United States, to which an undue and even ridiculous value was affixed. The ministry were blamed for not submitting to the House a project for securing the trade of America; combinations of other countries to the disadvantage of Great Britain, and frauds by the merchants of Canada and Nova Scotia, were apprehended; and it was said that not only the restraining act ought to be repealed, but the navigation laws should be made subservient to the commercial intercourse between the two countries.

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Bills were accordingly brought in for repealing the restraining act, and establishing a provisional intercourse with America. The former passed without much difficulty: in discussing the other, some enlightened and judicious members gave opinions which rectified the judgment of the House on the value of American commerce, and inculcated a proper regard for the British navigation law, the trade of the West India islands, and the commercial intercourse with Russia and other nations; Lord Sheffield and Mr. Eden displayed great ability in these debates; and Lord Sheffield, through the medium of the press^h rendered an essential service to the country, by imparting minute, precise, and copious information accompanied with sane and liberal maxims respecting general policy and colonial principles, tending at once to establish the real interests of the country, and to render her intercourse with her late colonies permanent, advantageous, and honourable to both. Finally, a temporary bill passed which became annual, abrogating the requisition of certain instruments from ships belonging to

^h Observations on the navigation and commerce of Great Britain, and of the American states. They gave a greater detail of the comparative state of navigation, manufacture and trade, than had been published before.

CHAP. the United States, and vesting in the King the
 XLV. power of regulating the commercial intercourse.

1783.
May.

24th June.

27th.

Debates on
the loan.

Another subject connected with America, which claimed the attention of parliament, was the case of the loyalists. Great commiseration of these unfortunate persons was expressed in the debates on the provisional articles of peace; the conduct of Philip III. of Spain was frequently cited in reproof of the British ministry. On concluding a truce with the United States of Holland in 1609, he obtained for his adherents the enjoyment of their estates, which was afterwards secured to them and their heirs by the treaty of Munster in 1648; but the loyalists of America who had foregone their all for Great Britain, had no resource but a recommendation of congress to the provincial legislatures. Parliament was informed in the course of the session, that although congress had recommended the loyalists, they would be obliged to quit for ever the American continent, to avoid the implacable fury of their republican countrymen. As an earnest of their further intentions, parliament, in a committee of supply, granted to the American officers, who had served in volunteer corps their half pay. Some differences of opinion prevailed on the propriety of this measure, which was particularly supported by Lord Sheffield, for the purpose of securing some immediate help for the military; both sides of the House, however, concurring in cordial and generous sentiments toward the honourable victims of persecution, an act was passed, appointing commissioners to inquire into their losses and services, with a view of making compensation.

The general proceedings of this session were remarkable for the eagerness with which the opposing parties contended in the race of popularity. The new ministry were compelled, by the exigencies of the times, to negotiate a loan of twelve millions for the service of the year, and to provide ways and means for paying the interest, with unusual dispatch. The

terms were arraigned with great severity ; and Lord Shelb^rn e made a condemnatory motion, which he supported with ability. An act which imposed a small stamp duty on receipts for money paid, was C H A P. XLV.
1783.
5th May. descended on with peculiar invidiousness : and as it was easy to alarm the trading interest, a considerable clamour was excited. Fortunately the ministry were sufficiently firm not to relinquish, in consequence of an ill-judged resistance, a tax which has since been much improved, and found beneficial and productive : it was, however, an inexhaustible theme of invective.

Under the influence of Mr. Burke, an act was passed, amending the statute of last year for regulating the office of paymaster ; and under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, a bill passed the Lower House for introducing economical reforms into the treasury offices, but was rejected by the Lords. Several acrimonious motions on the subject of pensions granted to Lord Thurlow, Colonel Barré, and other eminent public characters, displayed the activity of party without producing any permanent effect. A bill introduced by Lord Mahon, for preventing bribery and corruption at elections, was also unsuccessful ; and Alderman Sawbridge's annual motion for a reform of parliament met with its usual fate. Economical reforms.
30th June.
15th May.

From these efforts the public had not perhaps formed any sanguine expectations, but ever since the failure of Mr. Pitt's motion of last year, strenuous exertions had been made to obtain strong declarations as well from chartered and political, as from self-constituted bodies, in favour of a parliamentary reform. Many petitions were presented to the House of Commons, and as Mr. Pitt was the known patron of the measure, attempts were not wanting to impel him to introduce it before the change of ministry. These he evaded with great dexterity ; but when the ordinary business was completed, he obtained a call of the House, and brought forward three resolutions, first, that it was necessary to adopt measures for preventing Pitt's motion for a reform of parliament.
7th May.

C H A P.

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bribery and expense at elections ; second, when the majority of voters in a borough should be convicted of corruption, the borough should be disfranchised, and the minority not convicted, entitled to vote for the county ; and third, that an addition should be made to the county members, and representatives of the metropolis.

In recommending his resolutions Mr. Pitt pronounced an animated eulogy on the British constitution ; while England remained under a government perfectly free, he observed, she never failed to perform exploits which dazzled the neighbouring nations. But a melancholy series of events had eclipsed the glory of Britain, exhibiting a reverse of fortune which could be accounted for only by acknowledging that, during the last fifteen years, there had been a deviation from the principles of that happy constitution under which the people had so long flourished. He then entered into a history of the efforts which of late years had been made for satisfying the people on this important subject : a spirit of speculation had gone forth, and a variety of schemes, founded on visionary and impracticable ideas of reform, were suddenly produced. It was not for him, with unhallored hands, to touch the venerable pile of the constitution ; to see it in need of repair was sufficiently melancholy ; but the more he revered, the more he wished to secure its duration to the latest posterity, and the greater he felt the necessity of guarding against its decay. He had therefore abandoned the principle which he suggested last year ; and his present object was not to innovate, but rather renew and invigorate the spirit of the constitution, without deviating materially from its present form.

Among the expedients for restoring the constitution, and excluding the influence of the crown from parliament, he had principally heard of three ; one was to extend the right of voting for members of parliament to all the inhabitants of the kingdom indis-

erminately. This proposition was founded on the principle that men ought only to be governed by laws to which they had given their consent ; but he utterly rejected and condemned it, as a libel on the wisdom of those renowned ancestors, who, in the fulness of their wisdom, formed the constitution for the government of freemen, not of slaves. If this doctrine should prevail, all who voted for unsuccessful candidates must be slaves, and the members must be slaves to laws made against their wills, and in repugnance to their votes. Members once chosen were in effect representatives of the people including those who did not vote, and even those whose suffrages were against them ; the proposed innovation would infer that no House of Commons ever had been a true and constitutional representation of the people ; for no House of Commons had been, or could be elected by *all* the men in the kingdom. Another plan was to disfranchise all those which in common speech were termed *rotten boroughs*. The project was specious ; but though he considered them as deformities which disfigured the fabric of the constitution, he feared they could not be removed without endangering the whole pile. But though unwilling to dissolve, he would endeavour by his plan to restrain them as much as possible from injuring the constitution. This brought him to the third plan, that of adding to the House a certain number of members returned by the counties and the metropolis ; and as these members appeared least liable to the influence of corruption, he approved the measure, and though he would not fix a specific number in his motion, it ought not, in his opinion, to be less than a hundred. The House would then be more numerous than could be wished ; but better it should be so than the liberties of the country endangered by the baleful influence of the crown ; and the disfranchisement of boroughs, where the voters were convicted of corruption, would re-

CHAP. duce, by degrees, the number of members of parliament to a proper standard.

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Mr. Thomas Pitt supported the motion: but thinking a hundred additional members too many, he proposed that the increase should be only one representative for each county in England and Wales. Deprecating all misrepresentations which might arise from his peculiar situation, as proprietor of Old Sarum, he requested leave to surrender it into the hands of parliament as a voluntary sacrifice, as a victim to be offered up at the shrine of the constitution. Should the tender be accepted, he wished to recommend that the power of returning two members should be transferred to the proprietors of the Bank of England.

Mr. Fox also argued in favour of the motion, but treated with derision the offer of Mr. Thomas Pitt, who, he said, had notwithstanding his fine flourishes, made an offer which he knew could not be accepted. It had a great sound, but its real was far inferior to its apparent merit.

Mr. Dundas gave his reasons for voting in support of the resolutions; but both he and Mr. Thomas Pitt incurred the ridicule of Mr. Sheridan, as new proselytes to Mr. Pitt.

While the advocates of the measure were thus discordant among themselves, its opponents pursued a more consistent mode of conduct. Mr. Powys, the first speaker on that side, described the artifices used to inflame the public expectation, and procure petitions; he analyzed the resolutions of the county meetings, and the petitions before the House, and proved that the measures proposed were not qualified to satisfy the petitioners. He shewed from the publications of two associations, called the Constitutional Society, and the Quintuple Alliance, that universal suffrage alone could be adequate to their pretensions. The whole number of petitioners did not exceed

twenty thousand; and neither Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, or Halifax, great unrepresented manufacturing towns, were on the list. The flowers of oratory had been employed in decorating those happy, virtuous, halycon days, when England was so blessed in a chaste and equal representation; but he wished to be reminded in whose reign that uncorrupt and virtuous representation, and at what period of history that perfect equality existed.

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Lord North opposed the motion, in a speech equally distinguished for brilliant wit and solid argument. On the difference of opinion, respecting the number of additional knights of the shire to be returned, he used a sportive allusion to the tragedy of King Lear; where the abdicated monarch requires in his train a hundred knights, one of his daughters consents to allow him fifty; but I, he said, like the other daughter, will not consent to one, "no not one." The petitions which had been obtained proceeded from an inconsiderable minority in each county. That from Yorkshire, great and extensive as it was, came recommended only by nine thousand names; that of Suffolk was signed only by the sheriff; a proof that the sheriff of Suffolk wished for reform, but not that it was desired by the people. From a number so comparatively small as twenty thousand names subscribed to the petitions, was it credible that the sense of the whole people of England could be collected? And how had those petitions been obtained? Not from the public, but a prejudiced part of the public. The assizes were held twice, the sessions four times in every year; on these occasions the people met in the most fair and indiscriminate manner; but were the signatures to petition taken then? No; county meetings as they were called were held; projectors with setspeeches and ready framed petitions came prepared to meet a number of prejudiced people invited to sign what was ready for their signature: the question was begged or borrowed, or hospitably

C H A P. stolen to accommodate the craving appetites of such
XLV. craving guests. Those who neither liked the invitation
1783. nor the fare, prudently remained at home; and the House was to decide whether they would pay respect to the few reformers or the contented multitude.

Alluding to an insinuation, that bad ministers were continued in office contrary to the voice of the people, by the over-ruling influence of the crown, Lord North said, “I will not affect to think the stroke is not levelled at me; but, I trust, the candid and discerning part of the House will see that the attack is most unjust. I was not, when first honoured with office, a minister of chance, or a creature of whom parliament had no experience. I was found among you. I had been long known to you; I obtained your support; when that support was withdrawn, I ceased to be a minister. I was the creature of parliament in my rise; when I fell I was its victim. I came among you without connexion; here I was first known; you raised me up, you pulled me down. I have been the creature of your opinion and your power; and the history of my political life is one proof, which will stand against and overturn the wild assertions, that there is a corrupt influence in the crown, which destroyeth the independence of this House. Does my history shew the undue influence of the crown? Or does it not, on the contrary, prove the potent efficacy of the public voice? If then that voice is so powerful as to remove whatever may be displeasing to the opinions of the country, what need is there of this paraded reformation?” “One gentleman,” he proceeded, “says, give the people fifty knights, and then make your stand. — I oppose this idea — begin with innovation, and there is no knowing where you will stop — like the gravity of a sinking body, its velocity increases in proportion to its weight. The addition of one hundred, or even of fifty county members, would give a decided superiority to the landed interest over the commercial; and it is the

beauty of the constitution of the House of Commons, that like the general fabric of the British legislature, it provides for, and preserves the due balance, between the several great interests of the empire, the landed, the commercial, and the monied. But let us not begin, *Principiis obsta*. Let us act like men. We are not the deputies, but the representatives of the people. We are not to refer to them before we determine. We stand here as they would stand; to use our own discretion, without seeking any other guidance under heaven. In a word, as no defect in the constitution has been proved, as we have heard nothing but declamation and surmise, to warrant so awful and so important a measure, as an innovation on the form of that venerable palladium, which ages have sanctified, let me conjure you to reject — what, if adopted, must inevitably lead to ruin."

The motion was rejected by a majority of one hundred and forty-four.¹

Another measure of a popular nature was slightly discussed in the House of Commons. A bill for regulating the slave trade having been introduced, the Quakers took the opportunity to implore of parliament the total abolition of the traffic; but after a short debate, the petition was ordered to be laid on the table. The incident claims a degree of notice which in itself it would not deserve, as the first effort on a subject which afterward occasioned strenuous exertions, and produced violent diversities of opinion, as well in parliament, as among the public.

The only remaining subject of importance, which engaged the attention of parliament, was a message from the King to both Houses, requiring a separate establishment for the Prince of Wales, who was now arrived at the age of maturity. His Majesty agreed to allow to the heir apparent, fifty thousand pounds a year out of the civil list; but, in consideration that

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17th June.
First petition for
abolishing
the slave
trade.

23d.
Separate
establish-
ment of the
Prince of
Wales.
25th.

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16th July.
Close of the
session.

Definitive
treaties of
peace exe-
cuted.

2d Sept.

3d Sept.

the revenue so reduced could not bear any further burden, parliament granted to the King an aid of sixty thousand pounds to equip the Prince in a manner suited to his dignity.

At an advanced period of the year, the King terminated the session, thanking the House of Commons for enabling him to make provision for the Prince of Wales.

His Majesty also expressed regret at not being able to announce the completion of the definitive treaties; but after the signature of preliminaries every difficulty vanished, except those which arose from the unsettled state of the British government, and those which originated in a few captures made after the commencement of negotiations. For the sake of compliment, the Emperor of Germany and Empress of Russia were admitted as mediators; but the compacts were arranged without their assistance, though formally sanctioned by the declaratory attestations of their ministers. Holland, under the influence of France, acceded to preliminaries on the basis of mutual restitution, except the town of Negapatam, which was ceded to Great Britain. The definitive treaties with France, Spain, and America, were executed on the ensuing day.

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SIXTH.

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General view of the late belligerent powers: — America — loyalists provided for by Great Britain — condition of the American army. — Prudence of Washington — he resigns the command, and retires with honours and acclamations. — Cincinnati. — Debts and embarrassments of America. — State of France — Spain — Holland. — Conduct of the imperial courts. — State of Great Britain. — Interview of Mr. Adams with the King. — General remarks.

GREAT BRITAIN having now emerged from the most extraordinary contest in which a nation had ever engaged, and respecting the termination of which the most gloomy forebodings had been entertained, it only remains to review her situation in comparison with other powers, and particularly those with whom she had been engaged in hostilities.

Among these, America first claims attention, as well because she was the original source of contest, as from the novelty of her political relation to other states. Colonies planted and established in peace, fostered, protected, and enriched by the mother-country, had emancipated themselves from her restraint, and formed a separate, and in some respects hoped to become a rival establishment. To catholic and despotic monarchs, protestant republicans were indebted for that support, which enabled them to maintain principles of hatred and contempt of Kings, to spurn at all rule but that of a legislative elective body, and to associate with the ideas of freedom and natural right, those of republicanism and natural equality. If from motives of gratitude, the newly created

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states might be expected to court continual alliance, and give exclusive preference to France and Spain, other causes, not less cogent, naturally tended to regenerate partialities toward Great Britain. No part of the history of America was obscure or uncertain ; the period to which other nations are obliged to refer their origin, commonly called “ the night of time,” with them had no existence. Every record, every reminiscence brought back their ancient connexion, their indisputable origination ; and if the heat of party, or the perversion of historical fact, for the purposes of supposed advantage, sanctioned momentary misrepresentations of the conduct and motives of the parent state, the more imperishable, and never failing records of language, customs, manners, and jurisprudential forms, would always certify that not only the establishment of the Americans as a people, but the foundation of their most valuable social institutes, were derived from Great Britain. To these, at every period of the revolution, and in every project of a new government, they inflexibly adhered. Trial by jury, senatorial representation, liberty of the press, and habeas corpus, were, in their definition, not modes of administration, but natural rights of man ; and when they had attained independence founded on these principles, it was natural to expect, that every motive arising from similarity of principles, wants, feelings, and exertions, would induce attachment to and preference of Great Britain.

But these causes could not be speculated on as likely to produce immediate effects. Although the terms of peace with the United States were remarkably liberal in the articles of limits, fisheries, and indeed in every other respect, the condition of the country was neither settled nor enviable.

In the eager desire of the British ministry and people to derive exclusive advantages from a new connexion with America, the wildest sallies of imagination were indulged. Instead of viewing the United

States, in the situation they had elected, as a foreign country, some persons defined them by the whimsical term of a people *sui generis*; systems were preferred to experience, rash theory to successful practice; and attempts were even sanctioned for abandoning the navigation act, the guardian of British prosperity.^a But the excellent deliberative forms of British legislation, and the wholesome freedom of the press, prevented this fatal delusion from producing its worst effects. By wisdom in discussing the bills presented to Parliament, the evils to be apprehended from a too hasty decision were averted; and the temporary power vested in the sovereign, afforded time for obtaining the benefits of experience, instead of forming a rash judgment on the basis of mere speculation. The press was no less judiciously employed in obviating popular errors, and proving, by the best arguments drawn from analogy, comparison and calculation, that the greatest advantages would be derived from American commerce, not by wild eagerness or imprudent sacrifices, but by liberality mingled with prudence, and by a firm tenaciousness of the rights of Great Britain, without too jealously precluding the claims of America.^b

Soon after the signature of the definitive treaty, the British troops evacuated Charlestown, New York, and the few other remaining posts. Sir Guy Carleton, for his services, received a peerage, with the title of Lord Dorchester.

The congress literally fulfilled the terms of the provisional articles, by voting a recommendation of the loyalists in the very words of the treaty, but the manner of this cold recommendation was essentially different from those ardent recommendations, which

Loyalists provided for by Great Britain.

^a *Observations on the Commerce of America*, by Lord Sheffield, c.

^b The most distinguished and useful production on this subject, was the treatise by Lord Sheffield, which I have already quoted. It was read with avidity at the time, and can never be perused but with advantage and instruction. See also, *Opinions on interesting subjects*, by George Chalmers, Esq.

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in the beginning of the contest impelled the colonists to war against the parent state; it was in course disregarded, and the care of providing for its meritorious objects devolved on the mother-country. Claims were received under the act passed in the late session, from about three thousand heads of families; two-thirds of which were heard and determined in England, the remainder in Nova Scotia or Canada, whither commissioners were deputed. The grounds of remuneration were losses of real or personal estate, and of income arising from offices, professions, and trade.

The amount of the first species of claims exceeded ten millions sterling, from which deductions were made in small proportions, leaving always to the sufferer means of independent subsistence; the liquidations were made by instalments, interest being in the mean time allowed on the capital.^c

The second species of claimants demanded a hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year; about a hundred and twenty thousand of which were allowed, and vested in life annuities, from twenty to five hundred pounds each.

Condition of
the Ameri-
can army.

But although the American states had obtained the desired boon of peace and independence, and secured as public property the spoils of the loyalists, they found their troubles not terminated but varied. The army, by which congress had been enabled to attain the favourite objects of their wishes, and who had encountered incredible hardships and privations, found themselves unrewarded and unpaid; and did not obtain even the means of a decent subsistence. An anonymous publication proved a sufficient incitement to impel men thus situated, and in possession of

^c The deductions from the gross claims were made as follows: From sums not exceeding 10,000*l.* no abatement; from 10,000*l.* to 20,000*l.* a small diminution, which was progressively augmented to the largest demands. Yet after all drawbacks, some claimants received 50, some 70, and one 100,000*l.* An unparalleled instance of magnanimity and justice in a nation which had expended nearly a hundred and sixteen millions in the war.

arms, to active exertions for their own benefit. The most formidable effects were apprehended from a menaced combination, but averted through the temperance and judgment of General Washington. He first mollified the minds of the officers, in separate interviews, and afterward, in a general meeting, represented the infamy of adopting measures which would sully the glory of seven years service, in such glowing colours, that they unanimously declared, no circumstance of distress or danger should shake their confidence in the justice of their country, and that they viewed with abhorrence and rejected with disdain, the infamous proposition of the anonymous address. General Washington was highly applauded for his conduct in this alarming crisis; and the legislative body, instructed by recent danger, offered to the officers the amount of five years full pay in money, or in securities bearing interest at six per cent, instead of the half-pay which had been promised them for life.

When the officers were satisfied, a considerable difficulty still presented itself in dispersing so large a body of soldiers; but this was evaded by granting furloughs, and never requiring those who held them to return. Thus the impatience of individuals to revisit their native homes, diminished the risk of disbanding an unpaid army; the men, without means of meeting to confer on grievances, resumed their situations as husbandmen or artificers, and forgot those demands which the country was unable to liquidate. All were not, however so easily satisfied; eighty of the Pennsylvania levies marched from Lancaster, and being joined by other malcontents, to the amount of three hundred, repaired to the state-house at Philadelphia in martial array, placing guards at the doors, and threatening signal vengeance, unless their just demands were gratified within twenty minutes. Congress, however, found means to temporize with these mutineers, until General Washington dispatched a superior force, which quelled the disturbance. Several

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10th Mar.
15th.
Prudence of
Washington.

22d Mar.

26th May.

20th.

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18th Oct.
The army
disbanded.2d Nov.
Washington's fare-
well.15th Nov.
His retreat
with hon-
ours and
acclama-
tions.

were condemned to death and other punishments, but afterward pardoned.

At a late period of the year, when the numbers of the collective military body were greatly diminished by permissive absences, congress issued a proclamation applauding their armies for having displayed, in the progress of an arduous and difficult war, every military and patriotic virtue, thanking them for their long, eminent, and faithful services, and declaring the third of November the day of their dismission. With great difficulty four months pay, in part of several years of arrears, were presented to them. On the day preceding their separation, the general issued his valedictory orders, in endearing language, imploring "the choicest favours of Heaven on those who, under divine auspices, had secured innumerable blessings toothers;" he announced at the same time his intention to retire from the service; "the curtain of separation was soon to be drawn, and the military scene to him closed for ever."

After assisting at a splendid festival on the evacuation of New York, the general took an affecting leave of his officers. At Annapolis, which was then the seat of congress, he resigned his commission with an animated and eloquent compliment, into the hands of the president; having previously delivered to the comptroller in Philadelphia, in his own hand writing, an account of the public monies expended by him during the war, which did not amount to fifteen thousand pounds, and persevering in his original intention to decline all pecuniary compensation.

In his journey to his paternal estate at Mount Vernon, he was saluted at every town and village with acclamations, fireworks, bonfires, and other testimonials of joy and congratulation, and received from a grateful and admiring people the homage of numerous affectionate addresses. Perhaps no personal character ever stood on a more elevated point of view,

than that of Washington at this period. The triumph of the American cause was justly attributed to his perseverance, prudence, and judgment; and his self-denial formed a noble and dignified example, rarely paralleled.

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Cincinnati.

Yet such is the natural jealousy of republican governments, that when the general and his officers proposed to perpetuate their friendship by the establishment of a society called *Cincinnati*, the whole continent took alarm. It was regarded as an attempt to introduce into the state a military order; and the proposition to admit the progeny of the founders of American freedom into the society, was considered as a first step towards the establishment of an hereditary nobility: the subject was argued with so much heat, that the extension of the association beyond the persons of the founders was abandoned; and the project has no traces of existence, but in name and memory.^d

Although the gross sum of their debt appeared trifling, yet the pecuniary embarrassments of the United States presented great difficulties, even in temporary arrangement, and threatened to prove a permanent bar to their future prosperity. Their domestic debt was somewhat above thirty-four millions of dollars, or seven millions six hundred thousand pounds sterling. To France America was indebted for pecuniary aids, eighteen millions of livres^e, which it was agreed to liquidate by instalments, with interest at five per cent. in twelve years. A further sum of five millions of florins, or ten millions of livres^f, for which the King of France stood jointly engaged with congress to the States of Holland, was to be paid, with similar interest, in five years. Their remaining foreign debts amounted to about five hundred thou-

Debts and
embarrass-
ments of
America.

^d See considerations on the Society or Order of *Cincinnati*, by Cassius, supposed to be *Edanus Barke*, one of the chief justices of South Carolina; and Observations by an obscure Individual, both printed at Philadelphia in 1783.

^e 787,500 pounds sterling.

^f 497,500.

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sand pounds sterling. The limited authorities of congress, and the discretionary powers of the several provinces, formed great impediments to the funding of this sum : to a scheme formed by the general legislature, some acceded totally, and some partially ; while others withheld their consent from any measure which had a tendency to lode the purse and the sword in the same hands, and resisted, by force of arms, the agents employed by congress to collect the levies. In vain were exhortations and pathetic addresses issued, invoking the public justice, and appealing to the honour of the country ; the disregard of such motives, when incompatible with private interest, had been so long sanctioned, that such appeals met with little regard ; and the impotency of government and dishonesty of the people, afforded serious apprehensions of general bankruptcy. Under such alarms, increased by the violation of public faith, the force of private obligations was dreadfully diminished : government contracts were sold for a tenth part of their nominal value, and all was speculation, fraud, injustice, and rapine.

The eagerness of European powers to obtain a preference in the boasted commerce of America, added to these evils. An inundation of manufactures, tendered on easy terms of credit, tempted the merchants to adventure in purchases much exceeding their powers of payment. Debts were contracted by some to the full amount of their claims on the American government ; while the daily depreciation of government security involved the demands of individuals in the general state of confused speculation. Those who were indebted to British merchants on contracts made before the war, were additionally distressed. By the terms of the peace all these debts were to be paid ; money was the only medium, since no hope could exist that a depreciated paper currency would be accepted by the merchant whom a long and hazardous war had greatly injured by delay and risk.

Thus species rapidly disappeared ; while the means of restoring it were suppressed by the new circumstances of America, in consequence of her separation from the mother-country. Commercial treaties were formed with Sweden, Prussia, and the Emperor of Morocco ; but the attempts to negotiate with Great Britain were for some time unsuccessful. The intercourse with the West India Islands, from which, as colonies, they derived large supplies of gold and silver, was of course prohibited by the colonial and navigation system of Great Britain ; their fisheries were unproductive in consequence of the want of the same favourable markets, and the discontinuance of British bounties ; and their maritime weakness rendered unavailing their liberty of traffic in the Mediterranean, where they could no longer protect themselves against the Algerine corsairs. Thus surrounded by calamity, terror, and poverty, the people viewed with disgust the independence which they had been taught so highly to appreciate ; they held a degraded and precarious rank among the powers of the universe, nor did they emerge from their disgraceful situation, till experience pointed out the necessity of a permanent and general government, sufficiently strong to coerce all the members of the commonwealth, and sufficiently respected to restrain the effusions of visionary theory. Then was Washington again called from his domestic retreat, to guide by his wisdom those councils which owed their authority to his valour^g ; and then the government of America assumed stability, and acquired respect.^h

The powers of Europe, who had joined without provocation in an infamous conspiracy against Great Britain, saw, even in their success, no great cause for self-gratulation. They had brought the rival country to the necessity of accepting terms of peace, which

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Powers of
Europe.

^g In 1789.

^h Chiefly from Ramsay, vol. ii. chapters xxvi. and xxvii. I have also consulted Stedman, chapter xlvi. and the papers in the Annual Register and the Remembrancer.

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her own legislators had censured ; but their triumph was not attended with correspondent advantages. If the hope of supplanting or even rivalling Great Britain in the American trade animated their efforts ; their expectations received a severe shock, even in the progress of the contest, when Mr. Laurens expended the money lent by France in the purchase of British manufactures, justifying his conduct, by pleading his duty to buy the best and cheapest commodities.¹ If the expectation of reducing England to bankruptcy, or despair, influenced their conduct ; they must have seen with astonishment and anguish the noble exertion of national justice in behalf of the loyalists, to whose claims was devoted a larger sum than the whole debt which rendered America insolvent ; and have beheld with surprize those public and private exertions which promised to efface the memory of a long contest, by providing ample funds for paying the interest of the increased debt, and by giving unprecedented extension and vigour to commerce.

France.

2d Oct.

If the hope of ruining England instigated France, she met, in the immediate consequences of her attack, the just punishment of her perfidy. The ruined state of her finances rendered her the prey of speculists, and the scorn of Europe. Hardly was the definitive treaty executed when the Paris bank, called the *Caisse d' Escompte*, was declared insolvent ; and the people discovered, that the absurd system of economy, and avoiding of taxes, on which the war had been conducted, was founded in delusion, and led only to ruin and disgrace. In a further political result, the French government suffered still more severely for having espoused the American revolution ; to that important consequence it is not the duty of the historian at this period of his work specifically to advert ; suffice it to remark, that while speculations in finance, morality,

¹ See Lord Sheffield's Observations on American Commerce, and also the Commerce of America with Europe, by Brissot and Claviere, p. 119. English translation.

and religion, tended to raise feverish anxiety, repress virtuous conduct, and propagate general infidelity; the cause of established government was daily suffering by the influence and example of those, who, having acted in the American revolution, and taking its events for their theme, made disgraceful comparisons, and in the discussion of abstract theories, imparted to a numerous faction in France, hopes of a radical change, and a new government, if not absolutely republican, yet on a republican model.

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Spain disappointed in all the objects of the war, ^{Spain.} her exchequer beggared by its progress, and neither of the proposed indemnities, Jamaica or Gibraltar, obtained, remained in a state of inert listlessness, awaiting the reparation of her sufferings rather from time than exertion, reduced to the lowest ebb, without a political system of her own, but a veering weathercock, ready to be actuated by every gust from France.

Holland, in admitting the ascendancy of the ^{Holland.} French party in her counsels, began to experience the truth of a prophecy by Van Beuning, her old patriotic supporter against the force of Louis XIV.; that whenever she should forego her connexion with England, she might date from that day the loss of her political importance. Holland was the only power in the confederacy against Great Britain, who paid for her treachery by an uncompensated surrender of territory: her situation at the conclusion of the treaty was truly deplorable; all her colonies, which had been taken by England were recaptured by France, and formed a deposit in the hands of that crafty power, to insure placid obedience to such terms as advantage might dictate. Holland, thus obliged to submit, remained without a compensation for the ruin of her commerce, and plunder of her settlements, and an indignant witness of her own degradation, in consequence of the augmenting importance of Ostend.

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Conduct of
the imperial
courts.

In granting numerous freedoms of the town and port of Ostend, the Emperor sagaciously derived advantage from his neutrality; but his general conduct did not display a scheme of enlarged or magnanimous politics. He no longer followed the system of resisting the encroachments of great powers on the political balance of Europe, but evading the difficulties of an unproductive contest, adopted, in combination with the Empress of Russia, the mean policy of attacking the weak, in hopes to augment his strength by their plunder. A joint attack on the Turks was meditated; and in the eager pursuit of that object, a desire to avoid offence, occasioned a tacit renunciation of the new naval code. The principles were mentioned by the mediators of the definitive treaty; but Mr. Fitzherbert, admonished by Sir James Harris, resisted the introduction of the system, and convinced M. de Brieteuil, that it was not less injurious to the interests of France, than to those of England. The British ministry made a merit in Parliament of having by this omission prevented an unfavourable decision of so momentous a question, but M. de Vergennes, with still greater dexterity, assumed in a dispatch to Russia, the credit of having established the principle contended for, by not having expressly renounced it.

Great Britain.

Perhaps the acquiescence of the imperial courts on this subject, originated in the hope of interesting Great Britain in their projected contest; but the ministry resenting the evasive and selfish policy pursued by those powers during the war, refused to comply with their views, unless some more frank and decisive mode of conduct was adopted. Mr. Fox enjoined the British minister at Vienna, to observe a cautious reserve, and evade inquisitive interrogatories. He was to employ his sagacity in discovering the true situation of affairs between France and Austria; and if there should appear a probability of dissolving that connexion, it would be the duty of English mi-

nisters to promote so desirable an object. "The line of conduct marked out for you," he observed, "is briefly this: every thing is to be said and done, that can contribute to break the connexion between France and Austria. When that connexion shall be broken, every assistance will be given short of actual war; till that connexion shall be broken—nothing."^k

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These prudent resolutions were no less becoming than necessary to Great Britain, after so expensive a war, in which she had been so unjustly attacked, and her interests so basely deserted by those powers, who owed her the greatest obligations. The national debt was increased during the contest by nearly a hundred and sixteen millions of money; but the good faith of the nation, pursued without deviation, and shewn in every crisis, facilitated the discovery of resources for securing the interest, and finally annihilating the principal. The exigency required, however to be met with firmness, wisdom, and temperance; as even the slightest agitation of the public mind on so delicate a topic would have been attended with fatal consequences.

Every advantage might be expected from the national honour, and from the personal character of the sovereign, whose love of peace could only be suspended by the pursuit of honour and of justice. When he had reluctantly adopted the resolution, which proved the means of ending the war, it became a part of his system; and the same upright firmness of mind which made him unwilling to receive terms of peace, attended with a dismemberment of his hereditary dominions, rendered him strenuous in adhering to them, when imposed by necessity, and the voice of his people. His Majesty's views on this subject were clearly and nobly explained, when Mr. Adams, as envoy from the United States of America, obtained his first audience. The King declared, he

Interview of
Mr. Adams
with the
King.

^k Letter from Mr. Fox, secretary of state, to Sir R. M. Keith.

CHAP. anticipated the interview as the most critical moment
 XLVI. of his life, but he received the new minister with
 1783. gracious affability. "I was the last man in the
 kingdom, Sir," he said, "to consent to the inde-
 pendence of America; but now it is granted, I shall
 be the last man in the world to sanction a violation of
 it." This noble and dignified sentiment, joined with
 the general deportment of the King, formed such a
 refutation of the calumnies against him, by which
 revolt had been rendered popular, that Mr. Adams
 retired agitated and affected in the highest degree;
 he expressed, before he quitted the palace, his sense
 of the King's gracious demeanour, and always retained
 a strong attachment to his person and character.¹

Other subjects unconnected with war, peace, or
 finance, engaged the utmost vigour of speculation
 and rage of discussion. Party contests were now
 pursued with unusual acrimony; the rage of reform
 extended to the very basis and vitals of the constitu-
 tion. The affairs of India, which had been for a
 considerable time in a state of investigation, soon
 claimed uncommon exertions on the part of the le-
 gislature, while new objects arising in the political
 horizon, led to an era still more eventful and mo-
 mentous, than that to which the attention of the
 reader has been directed.

General re-
 marks.

Reviewing the period comprised in the present
 narrative, we find the kingdom involved in difficulties
 of the utmost magnitude. A combination of talent
 and influence, forming an opposition to the court,
 which drove from the helm, in eight years, five lists
 of ministers, besides occasioning subordinate changes;
 the populace impelled to the extremes of violence and
 the verge of insurrection, while the administration of
 the laws appeared too feeble to restrain their excesses;
 the stability of government scarcely restored, when
 the passions of the nation were engaged by a rebellion

¹ From private information.

in the American colonies, aided in its progress by those who are called the natural enemies, and those who ought to be the natural allies of Great Britain ; the contentions of party maintained during this conflict with increased fervour, and the conduct of the revolters justified and applauded by able and resolute parliamentary advocates ; the war unsuccessful, the peace censured as inglorious ; yet the occupations of commerce, the calls of justice, the duties of the subject, and the cares of government, pursued with unabated vigour and philosophic temperance. What could produce these astonishing effects ? What ensure, in such a crisis, the safety both of government and liberty, but the spirit of the British constitution, so admirably adapted to the preservation of both ? Protected by that constitution, all classes concurred in their endeavours to heal the wounds inflicted by war in the bosom of their country, and soon found their cares repaid with success beyond their hopes. Hostile confederacies may again menace, and internal dissensions may again plant inveteracy between leaders of political parties ; but the great interests of the state, the stability of law, and the full enjoyment of freedom, can never be impaired, while Great Britain preserves inviolate that source of greatness, and spring of happiness, her inestimable constitution.

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